



Division BS2341

Section W532

5











✓  
*THE WESTMINSTER NEW TESTAMENT*

GENERAL EDITOR

ALFRED E. GARVIE. M.A.(OXON.), D.D.(GLAS.)

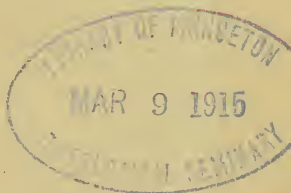
PRINCIPAL OF NEW COLLEGE, LONDON

# THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

✓  
BY REV. H. T. ANDREWS, B.A.

PROFESSOR OF NEW TESTAMENT EXEGESIS AND CRITICISM,  
NEW COLLEGE, HAMPSTEAD, LONDON



NEW YORK  
FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY  
LONDON  
ANDREW MELROSE



## PREFACE BY THE GENERAL EDITOR

HAVING carefully selected the editors of the ten volumes of which the Westminster New Testament will consist, and having fully explained to them the purpose of the series, the General Editor is leaving them the greatest possible liberty; and the editor of each volume is alone responsible for the opinions expressed in it. It is hoped that thus any lack of uniformity will be amply compensated for by the varied interest which the free expression of his own individuality by each editor will impart to the series. While the standpoint adopted is that of modern critical scholarship, only the generally accepted results, and not the vagaries of individual critics, are being presented, and in such a fashion as to avoid unnecessarily giving any offence or causing any difficulty to the reverent Bible student. As the series is intended especially for teachers, lay preachers, and others engaged in Christian work, their needs are being kept particularly in view, and the Commentary aims at being as practically useful as possible. A new arrangement in printing the text and the notes has been adopted, which it is believed will be found an improvement.

A. E. GARVIE.

NEW COLLEGE, LONDON.



# THE WESTMINSTER NEW TESTAMENT

## THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES



### INTRODUCTION.

THE Book of Acts occupies a unique position in the New Testament. It is our sole authority for a very considerable part of the history of the Apostolic age. If Acts had never been written, or if it had been lost in transmission, we should be dependent entirely upon the scattered references in the Epistles of St. Paul for our knowledge of the early Church, and the consequence would be that we should know next to nothing about the progress of Christianity between the Ascension of Jesus and the commencement of St. Paul's missionary activity. Without Acts, the story of the first Christian Brotherhood at Jerusalem would be buried in oblivion; we should never have heard of Pentecost; Philip and Stephen and Barnabas would be mere names to us; and it would be impossible to reconstruct with anything like certainty the career of the Apostle Paul.

Before we can properly use and appreciate the

## 2 Westminster New Testament

book, it is necessary to obtain an answer to the following questions :—

1. Who was the author of Acts?
2. Why was the book written?
3. At what time and under what circumstances was it composed?
4. What are the characteristics of the writer?
5. To what extent is the book to be accepted as reliable history?

### I. THE AUTHOR.

The Book of Acts never once mentions the name of its author. There is no reason for supposing that this silence is due to the writer's desire to conceal his identity. The explanation seems rather to be found in the fact that the writer was so well known to Theophilus, to whom the book was dedicated, and the wider circle of readers amongst whom it was first circulated, that it was absolutely unnecessary for him to affix his signature.

But though the name of the writer is not mentioned, there are certain indications in the book which enable us to reach a tolerably certain conclusion with regard to the question of authorship. (1) We know from the opening statement of Acts that its author was also the writer of the Third Gospel, which tradition unanimously associates with the name of Luke. (2) We know, too, that the writer of Acts must have been a companion of St. Paul. In several groups of passages he uses the first person plural. These "We-passages," as they are termed, include the accounts of (*a*) Paul's work at Philippi, xvi. 10-17; (*b*) Paul's visit to Troas, xx. 5-15; (*c*) the journey from Miletus to Jerusalem,



xxi. 1-18; (*d*) the voyage from Cæsarea to Rome, xxvii. 1-xxviii. 16. On all these occasions the writer was actually present and shared in the work and the travel of the great Apostle.

This second deduction, it is only fair to state, has been seriously challenged by a large number of modern scholars. "We cannot be certain," they argue, "that the man who wrote the 'We-passages' wrote the rest of the book. It is quite possible that a later writer embodied in his narrative some notes from a diary of one of Paul's companions without even troubling to change the use of the first person plural. A similar phenomenon is found in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, in which we find the editor boldly quoting from memoirs, without altering the use of the first person, though in the rest of the narrative he always employs the third."

This argument has recently been subjected to a most searching examination by one of the greatest of modern experts, Dr. Harnack of Berlin, who has reached the conclusion that it fails to stand the test of criticism. If the "We-passages" were the work of a different writer from the rest of the book, we should be certain to find marked dissimilarities in style, vocabulary, and the grammatical structure of sentences. We might expect, too, to discover points of discrepancy in the contents of the two parts of the book. Harnack's investigation, however, proves almost to demonstration that a comparison of the linguistic characteristics of the two parts of Acts reveals such remarkable resemblances, and such a distinct absence of differences, that the theory of a dual authorship is practically impossible. In the light of Harnack's masterly discussion we may regard it as certain that the unity of Acts

## 4 Westminster New Testament

admits of no question, and that the hand which wrote the "We-passages" wrote the rest of the narrative as well. If this be so, the second deduction mentioned above is indisputable.

But who was this companion of St. Paul? There are strong grounds for believing that he was Luke.

1. This theory has the support of the unanimous tradition of the Church. We know that from about 140 A.D. the Third Gospel was always ascribed to Luke, and there is no trace in early Christian literature of any suggestion of a rival name either for the Third Gospel or the Acts. Tradition, of course, is not infallible, but in the present instance there seems to be no good ground for questioning its statement. It seems hardly likely that so comparatively unimportant a man as Luke would have been credited with the authorship of these books unless there had been some basis of fact to justify the assumption. In almost every case where Christian tradition has obviously fathered a book upon a fictitious author, it has selected the name of an Apostle for its purpose.

2. The theory also claims to be in agreement with the scanty facts which are known to us about the life of Luke from the few references to him in the Epistles of St. Paul and in Patristic literature.

(a) We know from Paul's statements in Col. iv. 10-15 that Luke was of Gentile origin. Paul commences the paragraph by giving the salutations of "those who were of the circumcision," and then proceeds to send greetings from others (among them Luke), who obviously, therefore, were not Jews. The fact that Luke was a Greek and not a Jew helps to explain the interest which Acts shows in St. Paul's missions to the Gentiles.

(b) Luke was a physician (Col. iv. 14), and this accounts for the use of medical language, which is one of the characteristic features of the Third Gospel and the Acts.

(c) Luke was a companion of Paul, and was with him during his imprisonment at Rome (Col. iv. 14, Philem. 24, 2 Tim. iv. 11). This harmonises with the statements of Acts xxvii. and xxviii., which imply that the author accompanied Paul to Rome.

(d) The historian Eusebius tells us that Luke was "by race a native of Antioch." The prominent position assigned to Antioch in Acts implies that its author felt a particular interest in the city.

In the light of these facts and in the absence of any important rebutting evidence, we are justified in assuming, with Harnack, that tradition is right in regarding "Luke the beloved physician" as the author of Acts.

## II. THE AIM OF ACTS.

The second question which it is necessary to ask before we can understand Acts is, Why was the book written? What was the writer's purpose?

It may be taken for granted that the writer's primary purpose was historical. He wished to set forth the story of the progress of the Church after the Resurrection of Christ. Acts is a continuation of the Gospel of Luke. In the preface of the Gospel, the historian states the purpose which he had in view in plain terms: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us . . . it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first,

## 6 Westminster New Testament

to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus" (Luke i. 1-3). These words apply to Acts quite as much as to the Gospel, and make it clear that the writer's primary aim was to give a historical account of the development of the primitive Church, and to trace the steps by which the programme which the Risen Christ gave to the Apostles—"Ye shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts i. 8)—was fulfilled.

But it cannot be doubted that over and above this primary purpose there were some secondary motives which weighed very considerably with Luke in the composition of Acts. Luke is not a mere annalist. No historian worthy of the name ever consents to be simply a machine for tabulating facts. We have only to call to mind such classics as Grote's *History of Greece*, or Clarendon's *History of the Great Rebellion*, or Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, or Green's *History of the English People*, to see how great authors employ historical data to illustrate and support their own political or religious views. It would not be too much to say that most histories, like many novels, are consciously or unconsciously written with a purpose, and reflect the principles and prejudices of their authors.

What, then, were Luke's secondary motives in writing Acts?

1. It seems quite clear that Luke intended Acts to be not merely a historical narrative but a defence of the Christian Faith as well. As we shall see presently, when we come to discuss the date of the book, Acts was probably written in the reign of Domitian, at a time when Christianity

was beginning to come into conflict with the Roman Empire. There were signs on every side that the Church would have to pass through its baptism of fire. The spirit of persecution was in the air, and spasmodic outbreaks had already occurred in many provinces. Public pressure was being brought to bear on magistrates and governors to induce them to stamp out "the pestilential religion" of the Christians, and it seemed inevitable that before long the Roman Empire would find it necessary to bow before the storm of prejudice which had been aroused, and hand over its Christian subjects to the fury of the mob. The Book of Acts seems to have been written as a kind of counterblast to the anti-Christian agitation which threatened to force the Imperial officials to sacrifice justice to public clamour. Theophilus may have been, as many people think, a Roman magistrate, but whether this was the case or not, the Book of Acts was evidently meant to show, by an appeal to history, what was the correct attitude for a Roman official to adopt towards Christianity. Hence we find Luke laying the utmost stress on the justice and kindness displayed by Roman magistrates towards the new religion in early times. There are many illustrations of this friendly feeling in the book. Sergius Paulus, for instance, the proconsul of Cyprus, is represented as embracing the Christian Faith (xiii. 12). The magistrates at Philippi are depicted as bitterly repenting their hasty and unwarranted action in scourging and imprisoning the Apostles (xvi. 38, 39). Gallio, the brother of Seneca and proconsul of Achaia, scornfully dismisses the charges preferred against Paul by his

## 8 Westminster New Testament

Jewish opponents at Corinth (xviii. 14–16). The town-clerk at Ephesus protests against the savage attack which the mob had made upon Paul and his companions (xix. 36–41). The Chiliarch Claudius Lysias protects the Apostle on several occasions (xxii. 28, xxiii. 10, 23–30). The procurator Felix refuses to condemn Paul (xxiv. 25), as also does his successor Festus (xxv. 9). Publius, the head man of Malta, entertains Paul and his shipwrecked companions, and treats them with the utmost courtesy (xxviii. 8). And finally, when Paul reaches Rome, though he is a prisoner, he is allowed liberty to preach, “none forbidding him” (xxviii. 31). The phrase “none forbidding him” is represented by a single word in the Greek and placed in a most emphatic position in the sentence. It is the last word of the book, and may be said to constitute its climax. “None forbidding him” sums up the moral of Acts, and is the message which Luke gives to the Roman officials of his day. Acts may therefore not unfittingly be called the first Christian vindication of the great principle of religious liberty.

2. Roman officials were not the only class which Luke had in mind when he wrote the book. He intended his narrative to be an encouragement and a comfort to his suffering fellow-Christians as well. The words which Luke puts into the mouths of Peter and John as they stood before the Sanhedrin—“Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard” (iv. 19)—are not meant to be mere history: they are intended to be a rallying-cry for Luke’s contemporaries, an incentive



to courage and heroism in face of the policy of repression which was endeavouring to reduce Christianity to silence. The whole of Acts breathes the spirit of dauntless and invincible loyalty to Christ. The earliest disciples bear their witness in the teeth of "clenched antagonisms." The Sanhedrin threatens, the Jewish mob howls for their blood, but the Apostles and their followers are never deterred from their mission. Nothing could exceed the opposition which Paul has to encounter in the discharge of his work, yet in spite of all he never wavers, but persistently delivers his message, and never loses an opportunity of presenting the gospel to his fellows. The Book of Acts may thus be said to be the message of the Apostolic age to the persecuted Christians in the reign of Domitian. The message is twofold. (1) No opposition or persecution must be allowed to silence our witness for Christ. (2) Persecution is part of the discipline of life, and a powerful agent in the dissemination of truth. "Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God" (xiv. 22).

3. A third motive which seems to have influenced Luke in the composition of Acts is the desire to dissociate Christianity from the Judaism of Palestine. The great war between the Romans and the Jews, which had culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., had induced a bitter feeling of hostility throughout the Empire. To all appearances Christianity was simply a Jewish sect, and so shared the general hatred and unpopularity of the race from which it had emanated. The crimes of the Jews were visited on the heads of the Christians. Luke is evidently attempting, throughout the book,

to exonerate Christianity from all responsibility for the war and to dispel the suspicion which attached to it owing to its original connection with Judaism. The Jews of Jerusalem, as he points out, fiercely opposed Christianity from its very inception. They crucified its Founder. They endeavoured to stamp out the new religion in its infancy. They put Stephen to death. They dogged the footsteps of Paul, and tried to arouse public opinion against him in almost every city which he visited. They did their utmost to secure his condemnation, and were only prevented from carrying out their designs by the attitude of the Roman procurators. All through its history, Christianity had thriven in spite of Judaism. There was absolutely no ground, therefore, why Christians should be victimised because of their Jewish origin.

4. But if Acts evinces a decided bias against the Jews of Palestine, it nevertheless exhibits no little sympathy with the Jews of the Diaspora, the broader-minded Hellenists who were scattered throughout the world, and who formed from the first the most promising material for Christianity to work upon. It was from the ranks of these Hellenists and the circle of converts who had been won from paganism by their propaganda that the new religion won the bulk of its earliest recruits. There is little doubt that Luke is making an appeal to these Hellenists in the pages of his book. The speeches put into the mouths of Peter and Stephen and Paul are meant to convince not merely the audiences which they are addressing in Jerusalem and Galatia, but the broad-minded Jews of Luke's own day. The arguments are directed, with almost tedious reiteration, to prove



that Christianity is the true fulfilment of the religion of the Old Testament. Luke constantly makes his *dramatis personæ* emphasise the fact that Christianity is the only logical and legitimate outcome of the teaching of the prophets, and he is always citing instances to show that Hellenists from the earliest times were eager to accept the teaching of the Apostles.

5. Acts, however, had its message for the pagan no less than for the Hellenist. The speeches of Paul at Lystra and Athens are quoted in order to indicate the line of argument by which Christianity approached the Gentile world. The great utterance which is placed on the lips of Gamaliel—"If this work is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow it" (v. 39)—though spoken in the first instance to Jews, is intended to be a universal criterion. Luke spares no pains in his effort to demonstrate that the whole history of the movement displays the operation of God. Nothing is more striking in Acts than the stress which is laid upon the Divine initiative. Every new step which is taken from first to last is the result of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It seems evidently to have been Luke's intention to turn Gamaliel's hypothesis into a certainty, and so commend the Faith to all honest seekers after truth.

We conclude, therefore, that though Luke intended to give us history, he also intended to give us something more besides. Acts is the earliest Christian Apology. When we read between the lines of the narrative, we find that Luke, though he conceals his purpose with remarkable artistic skill, has evolved from the history of the primitive Church arguments which are well calculated to

meet all the objections that were urged against Christianity by its opponents at the commencement of the reign of Domitian.

### III. THE DATE OF ACTS.

There are, broadly speaking, three types of view amongst modern scholars with regard to the date of Acts.

1. There are some who maintain that Acts was written soon after the date at which the narrative ends, *i.e.*, at some point between Paul's imprisonment at Rome and the Neronian persecution, 60-65 A.D. It is urged in support of this view, that it is inconceivable that Luke should have stopped short in his story with such sudden abruptness if there had been anything more to tell. Why does he not continue the narrative and record the incidents connected with Paul's later life and martyrdom? This argument, however, is not altogether convincing. Luke may have intended to write another book dealing with the subsequent history; or he may have considered that he had achieved his design when he brought Paul to the city of Rome. If, as has already been suggested, he intended his book to illustrate the justice of the Roman magistrates in early times in their dealings with Christianity, it would have frustrated his purpose if he had proceeded to give an account of the martyrdom of Paul. There is an exact parallel to the strange ending of Acts in the Second Book of Maccabees, which closes with an account of the feast of Nicanor, and never mentions the death of Judas Maccabeus, though this event occurred almost immediately afterwards. If we

only possessed the narrative of Second Maccabees, we should be tempted to argue that the book must have been written between the feast of Nicanor and the death of Judas. We should be absolutely wrong, however, in drawing this conclusion. The explanation of the ending is to be found in the fact that the author was far more interested in Jewish rites and institutions than he was in the personality of Judas. The feast of Nicanor formed a fitting climax to the narrative, and to proceed to describe the death of Judas would have been bathos in view of the purpose of the writer. A similar explanation, *i.e.* the fulfilment of the author's purpose, may account for the abrupt termination of Acts.

2. The extreme school of modern critics place Acts about the close of the first century—*circa* A.D. 100. The argument upon which this theory is based is the supposition that the writer of Acts made use of the *Antiquities* of Josephus, which is usually dated about 95. It is true that there are some resemblances between the statements of Acts and Josephus—especially in the accounts of Theudas and Judas in Gamaliel's speech and the narrative of the death of Herod Agrippa. Some critics suppose that the mistake about Theudas was due to a misuse of Josephus, who mentions Theudas and Judas in the same order in which the names are placed in Acts, though he is careful, of course, to give them their proper dates. It is hardly likely, however, that a painstaking historian like the author of Acts would have been guilty of such culpable carelessness. Besides, though the resemblances between Acts and Josephus are striking, the differences of detail are equally

remarkable, and are difficult to reconcile with the theory. "Not proven," therefore, seems to be the only verdict which can be pronounced upon this view. Even if the dependence of Luke upon Josephus were established, it would not be absolutely necessary, as Dr. Burkitt has recently shown, to abandon the Lucan authorship of Acts. Luke was apparently quite a young man when he met Paul, and he might very well have been living at the commencement of the second century.

3. The general consensus of modern scholars, however, adopts a view intermediate between these two extremes, and dates Acts somewhere about the commencement of the reign of Domitian, *i.e.*, soon after 80 A.D. There is no general agreement as to the precise year; some critics prefer a date about five years earlier, others place the book five years later. Roughly speaking, the years 75-85 may be said to cover the limits of this theory. The grounds upon which this view is based are as follows:—Acts must be later than the Gospel of Luke, because of the distinct reference which is made to the latter in Acts i. 1. The Gospel of Luke implies the destruction of Jerusalem, and must therefore have been written later than 70 A.D. The earliest possible date for Acts is thus about 75, and we have no definite reason for supposing that an interval of more than ten years at any rate elapsed before its composition. On the whole, this view may be regarded as the best supported theory to-day, though the present writer is bound to add that the references in the Gospel of Luke, which have led the majority of modern scholars to infer that its author embellished Christ's prophecy of the

destruction of Jerusalem with detailed allusions gained from his own knowledge of the event, have never seemed to him to be decisive.

#### IV. THE CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE BOOK.

The Book of Acts possesses marked characteristics which enable us to form a clear conception of its author's general outlook upon life and religion. Many of these characteristics are found also in the Gospel of Luke, but some of the most interesting features of the book have no place in the "former treatise," and are connected with the new historical situation which arose after the ascension of Jesus. Among the most prominent of these characteristics are—

1. Luke's *conception of Christianity as a universal religion*. If the story of the Apostolic age had been written by a man who was secretly in sympathy with the narrower views of some of the Jewish Christians, the Book of Acts would have assumed a very different shape. Fortunately for us, from beginning to end Luke constitutes himself the champion of the broader school of Christians, who insisted on the universal scope of the gospel, and would not be satisfied till it had become a world-wide faith. The author of Acts is never more happy and never more interesting than when he is describing the victory of the Universalist party in the Church. His real theme is not "the Acts of the Apostles"—which is a most misleading title—but the story of the development of Christianity out of a Jewish sect into a world-religion.

## 16 Westminster New Testament

2. Luke's *religious interpretation of history*. The supreme rôle in Acts is not assigned to Peter or Paul or any other human hero, but if the phrase may be allowed, to God Himself. Behind all the external events which he records, Luke recognises "the unseen hand" of the Lord, who shapes and moulds the destiny of the Church in accordance with His programme. No book of the New Testament is more full of the supernatural than Acts, and the supernatural element in it, to use a paradox, is most supernatural when it works in natural ways. Pentecost is the supreme miracle of the Apostolic age, though, technically speaking, perhaps, the term miracle ought not to be applied to it at all.

3. Luke's *sympathy with the poor and the outcasts*. The Gospel of Luke has often been called "the Gospel of the poor," because its author seems "to delight in all the records which told of the mercy of the Saviour towards the poor, the humble, the despised." The same feature is found also in Acts. The point that interested Luke most of all in connection with the primitive Church at Jerusalem was the attempt which was made to institute the rule of "the common life." He gives two descriptions of this episode, both of which display keen appreciation. The one miracle which he singles out as an illustration of the wonderful works wrought by the Apostles immediately after Pentecost, is the healing of the lame beggar on the steps of the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. The peroration of Paul's address to the Ephesian elders at Miletus represents exactly the sentiments of Luke, though the words may have been actually used by the



Apostle—"In all things I gave you an example, how that so labouring ye ought to help the weak and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

4. Luke's *wide historical outlook*. Luke is the only Evangelist who attempts to place Christianity in its proper historical setting and show its relationship to the Roman Empire. The horizon of Matthew and Mark is on the frontiers of Palestine; the horizon of Luke stretches out to the confines of the Empire. The centre of the world for the first two Evangelists is Jerusalem; for Luke it is Rome. Hence we find in Acts a large amount of space devoted to the Imperial relationships of Christianity. Luke is always, as we have already seen, interested in the action of the Roman magistrates. From the very beginning of the book we are conscious of the fact that Rome is the historian's great objective, and the climax is reached when the Apostle Paul, after years of effort, is at last conducted within the walls of the great metropolis of the world.

5. Luke's *religious outlook*. Some features of the religious outlook of Acts have already been mentioned. Allusion has been made to Luke's conception of Christianity as a universal religion. We have remarked upon his conviction that the expansion of the Church is due to the Divine initiative and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Luke's strong belief in the supernatural led him, however, to exaggerate one element in the story. Both in the Gospel and the Acts we find an undue prominence given to angelic interventions. For instance, the deliverance of Peter and John from prison is represented as the work of "an angel of

the Lord" (v. 19); a full description is given in chap. xii. of the release of Peter by the help of an angel on a second occasion; an angel commissions Philip to meet the Ethiopian (viii. 26), and prompts Cornelius to send to Joppa for Simon (x. 3-7). The fact that in viii. 29 Luke substitutes "the Spirit" for the angel of ver. 26, seems to show that he does not intend his language to be taken literally. (See also Introduction, § VII., "The Theology of Acts.")

## V. THE HISTORICAL VALUE OF ACTS.

The most important question which the modern student of Acts is called upon to face is, How far can the narrative of Luke be relied upon as a trustworthy record of the Apostolic age?

Many different estimates have been formed with regard to the historical value of Acts. There are some scholars who regard the narrative as absolutely true even down to the smallest detail. There are others who think that it contains a very large percentage of fiction, and consequently place very little confidence in its statements. The true estimate is probably to be found midway between these two extremes. In the field of history infallibility is impossible. Like all other historians, Luke occasionally, especially in the first half of the book, falls into error, and misinterprets the facts. To condemn the narrative wholesale because of a few blemishes, however, is as absurd as it is unscientific. There can be little doubt that, taken as a whole, the Book of Acts gives us a faithful picture of the development of the early Church.



The grounds upon which the substantial accuracy of the narrative can be vindicated are as follows:—

1. We know from his preface to the Gospel that Luke possessed the true historical spirit. He knew perfectly well what ought to be the historian's ideal, and he shows remarkable insight with regard to the methods by which that ideal can be attained. Luke claims to have gained his information from "those who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word," and says that "he himself had traced the course of all things accurately from the first." If Luke is to be believed, therefore, as Sir W. Ramsay argues, "the sources at his command were unrivalled," and these sources were not blindly followed, but were carefully and critically tested, and he, at any rate, believed that as a result of this scientific examination of the evidence he had reached absolute certainty on the question of the facts. There is little room for doubt that Acts was written in the same spirit, and it must be admitted, therefore, that the narrative was drawn up by one who possessed, at any rate, the instincts and aspirations of a true historian.

2. Luke's opportunities of obtaining information were unique, especially for the second part of Acts. The "We-passages" contain his own personal testimony. He was an eye-witness of the events. He writes of what his own eyes had seen and his own ears had heard. As a companion of St. Paul, too, he possessed every facility for collecting the facts concerning the Apostle's career, and there is good reason to suppose that he made the best use of his privileges. Then his acquaintance with Philip the Evangelist explains the account which he is able to give of the mission to Samaria and other in-

cidents in the history of the primitive Church, while his intimacy with Barnabas must have enabled him to obtain first-hand evidence of many other elements in the story. There are some grounds, too, for supposing that in the early part of the book he obtained a considerable amount of material from written sources. The fact that Luke, with his enlightened conception of what is required in a historian, was able to go to actual eye-witnesses for the bulk of his narrative, is a strong *prima facie* reason for regarding the Book of Acts as trustworthy and correct.

3. When we are able to apply a test to Luke's statements, we generally find that they exhibit a remarkable accuracy. For instance, the narrative takes us to a great many cities, each with its own type of administration and its own special officials. The system of provincial government under the Roman Empire was most complex. There was the utmost diversity in the political status of different provinces and cities, and what is more, this political status was constantly changing. It would have been the easiest thing in the world for the author of Acts to have made a mistake; in fact, only personal knowledge could have kept him free from blunders. A modern illustration will help to make the difficulty understood. In the University of Oxford, the heads of the various colleges, like the chief officials in the various cities of the Roman Empire, are called by different titles. We speak, for instance, of the Master of Balliol, the President of Magdalen, the Warden of Merton, the Provost of Worcester, the Dean of Christchurch, the Principal of Mansfield. Now, if a writer who had never been to Oxford were to attempt to describe the

University, he would be sure to get the titles wrong. In the same way a writer who had never travelled through Asia Minor and Greece must almost inevitably have gone astray in describing the civic arrangements of the different cities. Luke, however, never makes a mistake. His descriptions have all been vindicated in the most convincing manner. Take the case of Ephesus, for instance. The graphic picture which Luke draws of the temple of Artemis has been completely verified down to the smallest detail by the statements found on inscriptions which have been excavated from the ruins of the city. Even the town-clerk is as familiar a figure on the inscriptions as he is in the pages of Luke's narrative. The description of Thessalonica, too, affords another excellent instance of Luke's minute accuracy. The chief magistrates are designated by the technical title of Politarchs—a term which is quite unique. Now it used to be argued by critics that the designation Politarch was impossible. It must be, they said, a pure invention of Luke's imagination, since the word was not even found in the dictionary. The tables have been completely turned, however, upon the critics, and the truthfulness of Luke's account triumphantly demonstrated by the discovery of an inscription at Thessalonica which actually contained the disputed word, and proved, too, that it was the official title of the magistrates of the city. The proved accuracy of Luke in minute details like these affords very strong presumptive evidence in favour of the narrative as a whole.

4. Another strong argument can be based upon the general sobriety and simplicity which char-

acterise in a very marked manner the story of the early Church as it is told in Acts. When we compare the canonical Acts with similar apocryphal writings, we cannot fail to be struck by the general absence of superstitious and thaumaturgic elements from the narrative. Apart from a few miracles and the introduction of two or three episodes containing instances of supposed angelic intervention, there is nothing in the book which comes into conflict with Christian experience and which cannot be paralleled in the later history of the Church. We can be perfectly certain that if Acts had been the invention of a later writer, there would have been an intensification of the supernatural on almost every page of the book.

5. A further point in favour of the reliability of Acts is to be found in the general absence of anachronisms and later ideas. There is no attempt, for instance, to antedate the developed form of Church organisation which began to come into existence soon after the close of the century. The theology of the book is simple and primitive. There is scarcely a trace of the Pauline or Petrine doctrine of the Atonement. The Christology is sometimes crude, and lacks the distinctness which marks the interpretation of Christ which is found in the later Epistles of Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews.

But though the general historical picture in Acts is undoubtedly true to fact, there are some blemishes in the narrative which cannot be overlooked. Luke's explanation of Pentecost, for instance, seems to convert a great spiritual operation into a strange and pointless miracle. As is explained in the notes, the significance of

Pentecost lies in the outpouring of spiritual energy upon the Church, rather than in the endowment of the disciples with the miraculous gift of speaking in foreign languages. The reference to Theudas in Gamaliel's speech must be frankly acknowledged to be an anachronism, since in spite of all the ingenuity which has been expended on the problem there appears to be no explanation which can satisfactorily solve the difficulty. The account of the fate which befell Ananias and Sapphira seems inexplicable, and must be treated either as a gross exaggeration or a "religious apologue." There is an apparent discrepancy, too, between Acts and the Epistle to the Galatians with regard to the number of visits which Paul paid to Jerusalem within a certain period of his career. It is quite possible that this discrepancy admits of explanation (see note on xi. 30), but in any case Paul's own statement in Galatians must be regarded as authoritative. But, after all, these are only minor defects, and do not throw any suspicion upon the record taken as a whole.

There are two other questions which will probably suggest themselves to the minds of the thoughtful reader: (1) Can we accept the miraculous elements in the narrative? (2) Can we regard the speeches as authentic?

1. With regard to the first question, it is impossible here to discuss the problem of the possibility of miracles. We can only concern ourselves with the matter of evidence. Granted the possibility of miracles, we have very strong first-hand evidence of the fact that miracles were wrought in the Apostolic age. (a) We have first of all the explicit testimony of the Apostle Paul, who in two passages

states quite definitely that he himself worked miracles (2 Cor. xii. 12; Rom. xv. 18). (b) We have the testimony of the "We-passages" which record the miraculous cure of the father of Publius and others in the island of Malta (xxviii. 8-10). There can be little doubt that this account comes from Luke's own personal knowledge. The fact that he was among the shipwrecked refugees on the island and that he describes the illness of Publius' father so minutely and in such technical language, seems to be clear proof that he is speaking as an eye-witness. His own medical training, too, would seem to make it impossible that he should have been deceived. In the light of this twofold evidence there seems to be no sound reason for rejecting any of the important miracles of healing recorded in the book.

2. The problem of the authenticity of the speeches is more difficult, because in the case of Gamaliel Luke gives himself completely away by his anachronism with regard to Theudas. Yet there seem to be several reasons which ought to make us hesitate before we too hastily assume that the addresses put into the mouths of Peter and Stephen and Paul are altogether the free composition of the historian himself.

(a) The speeches of Peter after Pentecost and the address of James at the council of Jerusalem have several points of resemblance with the Epistles ascribed to these Apostles. (b) There is nothing in the speeches of Paul which at all conflicts with the statements in his Epistles. (c) In spite of a general resemblance on the surface, the speeches ascribed to the different leaders show marked variations of tone and argument. (d) The theology



involved in the different speeches seems to be thoroughly in accord with the situation, and does not appear to be a reproduction of Luke's own position, as far as we are able to make out what that position was. There is a distinct contrast, for instance, between a Christology which is based on a Doctrine of the Virgin Birth and the Christology implied in the speech of Peter after Pentecost.

On these grounds, the present writer is inclined to attach very considerable weight to the speeches in Acts and to hold that they represent the earliest theology of the Church.

## VI. THE MAIN STAGES IN THE NARRATIVE.

The Book of Acts covers a period of about thirty years. At its commencement Christianity is merely a Jewish sect, at its close it has become a world-wide religion. The process by which this transformation was effected is the main theme of the narrative. The development passes through the following stages:—

1. In the opening chapters Christianity is part and parcel of Judaism. The disciples are found attending the Temple services and participating in all the rites and ceremonies connected with the Jewish religion. If the evolution had been arrested at this stage, the Christian religion would have remained a Jewish sect, like Pharisaism. The only characteristic feature which would have differentiated it would have been the conviction that the Messiah had already come.

2. There were many types of Jews, and the question soon arose whether the Christian Faith

was to be the peculiar privilege of the Hebrews who lived in Palestine, or whether the Hellenists, who were much less strict in their adherence to Judaism, were also to be accorded the same right of entrance into the Church. Permission seems to have been grudgingly given at first, and the Hellenists protested against the treatment which they received. A crisis was reached, but the Hellenists won the day, special officers being appointed to look after their interests. Stephen's great utterance marks the commencement of the breach with Judaism. He was the first to enunciate the principle that Christianity is not indissolubly bound up with the Jewish Temple.

3. The mission of Philip to Samaria represents a third expansion which further helped to break down the barriers of exclusiveness. Severely criticised at first, the movement won recognition for itself by the manifest tokens of the Divine blessing which attended the preaching of Philip.

4. The question now arose as to whether proselytes and semi-proselytes, *i.e.*, those who had accepted the Jewish faith but had not adopted the rite of circumcision, were to be welcomed into the Christian fold. The cases of the Ethiopian eunuch and Cornelius settled the question in the affirmative. In both instances Luke represents the recognition of the new principle as due to the direct inspiration of God.

5. The last stage was reached when, mainly through the efforts of Paul and Barnabas, all restrictions were broken down, and it was recognised that Christianity was intended to be the religion of the Gentiles as well as the Jews. The battle was not won all at once. There were many Jewish



Christians who felt that, though Gentile converts might be accepted, they ought to be required to graduate in Judaism afterwards. The council of Jerusalem, however, refused to impose any but the most simple and necessary conditions upon Gentile believers. The controversy continued for many years, but in the long run the broader view prevailed, and the universal scope of Christianity became an established fact. The missionary journeys of St. Paul set the final seal upon the great principle, which was never afterwards challenged.

## VII. THE THEOLOGY OF ACTS.

The theology of Acts is extremely interesting because it represents the earliest interpretation of the facts of the Christian Religion. The faith of the primitive Christians concerned itself very little with speculation, and did not attempt to create a philosophy of religion. It clung tenaciously to its facts, and left the explanation of them to a later generation. The three most prominent ideas are: (1) The belief in God as the Source of all energy and power; (2) the belief in Christ as the Risen Saviour who is ever present with His Church and is soon to reappear upon the earth; (3) the belief in the Holy Spirit as the Agent through whom God acts upon the minds of men.

But though Acts never ventures into the realm of metaphysical speculation, there were some questions which thrust themselves at once upon the Church and demanded an answer.

1. The question, for instance, What think ye of Christ? arose immediately, and the earliest Christians had to face the problem as to the relationship

between Christ and God. The first answer seems to have been given on what are now called Adoptionist lines. Christ was "a man," as Peter puts it, "proved by his miracles to have come from God," and exalted to the rank of Divinity (see notes on ii. 22 and 36). A similar explanation seems to be implied by Paul's address at Antioch (chap. xiii.), where the words "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," are applied to Christ only after His resurrection from the dead.

2. Another question also forced itself upon the minds of the disciples, How are we to explain the Crucifixion? Here again the answers given at first were crude in comparison with later interpretations of the death of Christ. Two suggestions were made: (*a*) The death of Christ was part of God's purpose (see note on ii. 23); (*b*) the death of Christ was the fulfilment of prophecy (see note on iii. 18). There is only one passage in Acts in which any atoning value is attached to the death of Christ, *i.e.*, in the great declaration of Paul in his address to the Ephesian elders (xx. 28).

3. Another point which stamps the theology of Acts as primitive is the emphasis which is laid on the speedy reappearance of Christ upon the earth. This is specially characteristic of the speeches in the earlier part of the book, in which the Parousia or Return of Christ is undoubtedly the dominant note, and completely dwarfs all other conceptions, as it does also in the earlier Epistles of St. Paul. In the latter part of the book, however, this idea is much less prominent, and ceases to occupy the predominant position assigned to it in the early speeches.

We must regard the theology of Acts, therefore,

not as a final statement of Christian Doctrine, but rather as a first and somewhat premature attempt to find an answer to the most pressing problems which confronted the early Church.

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit undoubtedly occupies the most prominent position in the theology of Acts. The Church is depicted as owing its very existence to the Baptism of the Spirit at Pentecost. The power which came upon the little group of Christians and enabled them to capture the people of Jerusalem, the various gifts with which their leaders were endowed for the work of the ministry, the new enthusiasm for the common life, are all traced directly to the influence of the Holy Spirit. Pentecost, however, was not an isolated event. At all the great crises and turning-points in the history of the Church there is a fresh outpouring of the Spirit. There is a Pentecost, for instance, in Samaria, which sets the seal of Divine approval on the work of Philip (viii. 15-18). Cornelius and the first Gentile converts receive a similar baptism of the Spirit, and it is expressly stated that the gift which they received resembled in all respects that which was bestowed upon the early Church (xi. 15-17). The separation of Paul and Barnabas for missionary work was also due to the initiative of the Holy Spirit (xiii. 2). The events which led to the European journey are represented as specially directed by the operation of the Spirit (xvi. 6, 7). The fact that certain disciples at Ephesus had not received the Baptism of the Spirit is regarded by Paul as a serious defect, which he proceeds at once to attempt to remedy (xix. 1-6).

In spite of the fact, however, that Luke lays

such stress upon the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, it cannot be said that he is successful in drawing a clear distinction between "the Spirit" and "the living Christ." In one passage the two great conceptions seem to be used interchangeably: "And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, *having been forbidden by the Holy Ghost to speak the word in Asia*; and when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; and *the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not*" (xvi. 6, 7).

### VIII. THE CHRONOLOGY OF ACTS.

The chronology of Acts raises several serious and intricate problems, and it cannot be said that any general agreement exists among scholars with regard to many of the most important dates. The following table (which is taken from Hastings' *Dictionary*) gives four different schemes, a comparison of which will indicate the main points of divergence:—

	H. <sup>1</sup>	T. <sup>2</sup>	R. <sup>3</sup>	L. <sup>4</sup>
Crucifixion . . . . .	29 or 30	29	30	30
St. Paul's conversion . . . .	30	35-36	33	34
St. Paul's first visit to Jerusalem .	33	38	35-36	37
St. Paul's second visit to Jerusalem	44	46	46	45
First missionary journey . . .	45	47	47	48
Second missionary journey . . .	47	49	50	51
Arrival at Corinth . . . . .	48	50	51	52
Third missionary journey . . .	50	52	53	54
Departure from Ephesus . . . .	53	55	56	57
Final visit to Jerusalem . . .	54	56	57	58
Arrival at Rome . . . . .	57	59	60	61
Close of Acts . . . . .	59	61	62	63

<sup>1</sup> Harnack.      <sup>2</sup> Turner, author of the article on Chronology in Hastings' *Dictionary*.      <sup>3</sup> Sir W. Ramsay.      <sup>4</sup> Lightfoot.

The most important point of divergence, it will be noted, is concerned with the length of the interval between the Crucifixion and the Conversion of St. Paul. When we ask the question, How long a period is covered by the first eight chapters of Acts? we get the most varied answers. Harnack says that all the events recorded in the opening chapters happened in a few months; Turner, on the other hand, holds that they occupied a period of five or six years. The other two theories stand half-way between these two extremes. The reason for the difference between the two extreme theories is as follows: The decisive date in Acts—the date upon which the chronology of the Apostolic age depends—is the date of the year in which Felix was recalled and Festus appointed as his successor. If we can determine this date, everything else can be fixed within very narrow limits. Unfortunately, however, the available data lead us to two different results, which vary by five years. One result places the recall of Felix in 60, the other in 55. If we adopt the former alternative, we are led to the conclusion of Harnack; if the latter, to that of the other chronologists.

It is impossible to enter into the minutiae of what is one of the most complicated problems connected with the history of the Apostolic age. The present writer may perhaps be allowed to say that after a very careful study of the evidence, he feels that the balance of probability slightly preponderates in favour of the view adopted by Harnack.

Acts i. 1-11.

THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION.

The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all  
2 that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in  
which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy  
Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom  
3 he had chosen : to whom also he shewed himself alive  
after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of  
them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to  
4 the kingdom of God : and, being assembled together with  
them, commanded that they should not depart from  
Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which,  
5 saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized  
with water ; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost  
6 not many days hence. When they therefore were come  
together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this  
7 time restore again the kingdom to Israel ? And he said  
unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the  
seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.  
8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is  
come upon you : and ye shall be witnesses unto me both  
in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto  
9 the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken  
these things, while they beheld, he was taken up ; and a  
10 cloud received him out of their sight. And, while they  
looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold,  
11 two men stood by them in white apparel ; which also  
said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into



heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

The first chapter of Acts opens with a few brief words of introduction, which link it on to the Third Gospel, and then, without even finishing his sentence, Luke plunges at once into his subject. He does not start, it should be noticed, exactly at the point where the Gospel finishes, for the Gospel carries us right on to the Ascension, but tells over again part of the story of the intercourse between the Risen Christ and His disciples, re-emphasising the essential points and adding some fresh incidents. The reason for the repetition is obvious. The Resurrection is both the end and the beginning. It is the end of the history of Christ's life on earth, it is the beginning of the history of the Church. The fact of the Resurrection is the great foundation upon which the whole fabric of the Church was built. If this chapter were missing and all subsequent allusions to the Resurrection erased from the book, the narrative of Acts would be inexplicable.

This paragraph contains (1) the words of introduction dedicating the book to Theophilus (vers. 1, 2); (2) a general statement about the Resurrection of Christ (ver. 3); (3) an account of a special meeting between Christ and the Apostles (vers. 4, 5); (4) the conversation before the Ascension (vers. 6-8); (5) the account of the Ascension (vers. 9-11).

1. **The former treatise** is the Gospel of Luke. Acts is a companion volume to the Gospel. The Gospel tells the story of the life and work of the

Incarnate Christ on earth, Acts the story of the work of the Risen Christ in and through the Church.

**Theophilus.** Nothing is known about Theophilus except that the Third Gospel is also dedicated to him (Luke i. 3). The fact that Luke calls him "most excellent Theophilus," and that the same term is applied to Felix (xxiii. 26, xxiv. 3) and Festus (xxvi. 25) in token of their official position, has led many scholars to suppose that Theophilus was a man of high official rank—probably the governor of a Roman province. This suggestion, however, though it is a possible hypothesis, cannot be substantiated, because we know that the term in question was used by Josephus merely as a mark of friendship, without any official reference, signifying simply "my dear friend."

**2. began to do and teach.** This expression is the Greek way of saying "all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning of His ministry until the day," etc. No stress can be laid on the word "began," and we have no warrant for supposing that Luke intended us to understand from this phrase that the Gospel narrative only represents the commencement of the ministry of Christ.

**taken up.** An allusion to the Ascension as described in Luke xxiv. 51, though there is some doubt as to whether the words "was carried up into heaven" were found in the original text of that verse.

**given commandments.** The Commandments which Christ gave to the Apostles after the Resurrection, according to Luke's Gospel, were twofold: (1) "That repentance and remission of sin should be preached unto all nations;" (2) "Tarry in the city



until ye be clothed with power" (Luke xxiv. 47-49).

**through the Holy Ghost.** Jesus during His earthly life was inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit descended upon Him at the Baptism (Matt. iii. 16), drove Him into the wilderness (Matt. iv. 1), and anointed Him for His ministry (Luke iv. 18). We have here another link between the Gospel and the Acts. The same Spirit which inspired Jesus throughout His career inspired His followers also after the Ascension. See n. on x. 38.

3. We should naturally expect that at this point Luke would give us an account of his object in writing Acts. He evidently started with this intention. The reference to "the former treatise" implies a contrast which is never worked out. In his haste to get to his subject, Luke leaves the sentence which he meant to write unfinished, and plunges at once into his theme.

**infallible proofs.** There is no word for "infallible" in the Greek, but the word translated "proof" is a stronger term than its English equivalent. It means a proof that comes out of direct personal experience, and is not derived merely from the testimony of other people. The reference, of course, is to the appearances of Christ after the Resurrection to the Apostles and others.

**being seen of them forty days.** The correct rendering of these words is "appearing unto them at intervals during forty days." This is the only reference to the interval of forty days between the Resurrection and the Ascension. The last chapter in Luke's Gospel seems to imply that the Ascen-

sion took place almost immediately after the Resurrection. After the Crucifixion, "that very day" (Luke xxiv. 13), Jesus walked with the two disciples to Emmaus. After supper "they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem" (ver. 33). They reported the appearance of Jesus to the Eleven, and "as they spake" Jesus Himself stood in the midst. There is no hint of any break in the narrative till the final parting is reached, but possibly there may be a gap between ver. 43 and ver. 44. Matthew and Mark have no reference to an interval, but imply that enough time must have elapsed for the disciples to reach Galilee, where Jesus appeared to them. The Fourth Gospel requires an interval of eight days at any rate (John xx. 26), and perhaps longer, if the appearance recorded in the last chapter is later than those described in chap. xx. Probably "the forty days" is intended to be a round number, and need not be taken quite literally.

**speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom.** There is no allusion here to any recondite or esoteric teaching. We may be sure that the most important elements in Christ's instruction have been recorded. It is a certain proof of weakness when any theory of the Church or doctrine of the Sacraments bases itself upon the hypothesis that it was taught by Christ to the Apostles after the Resurrection.

**4. being assembled together with them.** The meeting between Christ and the disciples described in this verse seems to be identical with the one recorded in the last chapter of Luke's Gospel, at which almost the same words were spoken by Christ (Luke xxiv. 49). For the ex-

planation of the words, **the promise of the Father which ye heard of me**, we must refer to such words as "I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter," and other similar expressions in the Gospel of St. John (xiv. 16, 26, xv. 26). It is strange that there is no reference to this promise in the other three Gospels.

5. The contrast between the Baptism of John and the Baptism of the Holy Ghost is emphasised on several occasions in Acts (cf. xi. 16, xix. 2-4), as it is also in the Fourth Gospel (cf. John i. 6-8, iii. 25-30). It is highly probable that there was a movement in Asia Minor which exalted John the Baptist at the expense of Christ, and these passages are intended to be a corrective.

6. **When therefore they were come together.** These words introduce the account of the last scene in Christ's life on earth. This final meeting just before the Ascension took place on the Mount of Olives (see ver. 12).

**dost thou at this time restore the kingdom?** This question shows that up to the very last the Apostles completely misunderstood the essential point in Christ's teaching with regard to the Kingdom of Heaven. They still looked for the establishment of an earthly empire.

8. **ye shall receive power.** Jesus refuses to satisfy the curiosity of the Apostles with regard to the future. "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons." There is something more important than knowledge—viz., power. Christianity is essentially dynamic. It confers power. In view of the gigantic task which awaited the early Church, of preaching the gospel in the face of the

## 38 Westminster New Testament

“clenched antagonisms” of prejudice and superstition, the one thing that was essential was an endowment of spiritual power.

**ye shall be my witnesses.** The word “witness” is employed very frequently in Acts to describe the character of the work of the first preachers of the gospel (Acts i. 22, ii. 32, iii. 15, v. 32, x. 39–41, xiii. 31, xxii. 15, xxvi. 16). They did not deal with abstractions. They gave personal testimony to the facts of their own experience: “That which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld and our hands handled . . . declare we unto you” (1 John i. 1).

**in Jerusalem . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth.** In these words Jesus states the programme of Christianity. Its mission is universal (compare Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15; Luke xxiv. 47). The narrative in Acts describes the fulfilment of the programme. Chapters i.–vii. give an account of the work in Jerusalem; viii. and ix., the mission to Samaria; x.–xxviii., the wider missionary enterprise which culminates in the arrival of Paul at Rome.

9. This is the only account of the Ascension which we possess, though there are brief references to it in Mark xvi. 19 and Luke xxiv. 51, and allusions in Eph. iv. 8–10; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Heb. iv. 14; 1 Pet. iii. 22.

10. **two men . . . in white apparel.** Luke evidently means “angels.” A similar phrase occurs in the Gospel (Luke xxiv. 4; compare John xx. 12), and also in Acts x. 30 (compare x. 3).

11. **men of Galilee.** The Apostles were all Galileans now. Judas was the only one who had come from Judæa, and he was dead.

## Acts i. 12-26.

## THE FIRST CHURCH MEETING.

- 12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.
- 13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphæus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas
- 14 the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the
- 15 mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred
- 16 and twenty,) Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide
- 17 to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all
- 19 his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of
- 20 blood. For it is written in the book of Psalms, *Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein*: and,
- 21 *His bishoprick let another take*. Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord
- 22 Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of
- 23 his resurrection. And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast

## 40 Westminster New Testament

25 chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that  
26 he might go to his own place. And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

These verses describe the week of waiting which intervened between the Ascension and Pentecost. They contain an account of (1) the disciples who formed the earliest Christian brotherhood and their meetings in the upper chamber (vers. 12-14); (2) the address of Peter urging the necessity for electing a successor to Judas (vers. 15-22); (3) the election of Matthias (vers. 23-26).

**12. from the mount called Olivet.** The Mount of Olives is the name given to a ridge of hills on the east of Jerusalem. It is separated from the city by the valley of the Kidron. The highest peaks are about 2600 feet above the sea-level, and so about 200 feet higher than the hill on which the Temple was built. They thus afford a magnificent view both of Jerusalem and the surrounding country. The Mount of Olives was full of sacred associations to the disciples. It was from this mountain that Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Matt. xxi. 1). It was here that He gave His great discourse about the destruction of the Temple (Matt. xxiv. 3). He seems to have taken up His abode upon the mountain during the week before the Passion (Luke xxi. 37). And most pathetic of all was the memory of the scene in the garden of Gethsemane, which is situated on the western slopes of Olivet (Matt. xxvi. 30).

There is no real discrepancy between Acts and the statement in Luke xxiv. 50, "He led them out



until they were over against Bethany," since Bethany is situated at the foot of the southern slopes of the mountain.

**a sabbath day's journey** was two thousand paces or cubits—about three-quarters of an English mile. It was supposed to represent the distance between the tabernacle and the farthest point of the camp in the wilderness.

**13. an upper room.** It is quite possible that this may have been the room in which Jesus celebrated the Last Supper with the disciples (Mark xiv. 15), and in which He appeared to them after His Resurrection (John xx. 19). The Eleven seem to have made this room their temporary home.

**Peter and James.** There are three other lists of Apostles given in (1) Matt. x. 2-4; (2) Mark iii. 16-19; (3) Luke vi. 14-16. The order varies in each list, except that the first, fifth, and ninth names are always the same. The disciples were apparently divided into three groups of four—the leaders of the groups being respectively Peter, Philip, and James the son of Alphæus.

**14. in prayer.** The words "and in supplication" are omitted in the R.V. They were added to emphasise the fact that the early Church was cradled in the atmosphere of prayer.

**with one accord.** Luke lays the greatest stress on the spirit of unity that prevailed in early times. The phrase occurs ten times in Acts.

**with the women.** Among these were undoubtedly Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Joanna, and Salome (Mark xvi. 1; Luke xxiv. 10).

**and with his brethren.** Their names are given in Matt. xiii. 55 as, James, Joseph, Simon, and

Judas. In the Gospels they are represented as opposing Jesus (Mark iii. 21; John vii. 5). The explanation of the change in their attitude is to be found in the statement of Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 7, that Jesus had appeared after His Resurrection to James.

**15. in the midst of the disciples.** The true reading of the original is "in the midst of the brethren." "The brethren" was the earliest name by which Christians were called.

**an hundred and twenty.** Luke is careful in the early part of Acts to give statistics with regard to the number of believers. The figure given here of course only refers to the Christians in Jerusalem. There were many others scattered about Palestine. We know that Jesus appeared to five hundred brethren at once (1 Cor. xv. 6).

**16. Peter's address to the Church** deals with two points: (1) the fate of Judas, (2) the necessity for appointing a successor. The treachery of Judas raised a problem in the minds of the brethren—How was it that Jesus admitted Judas into the company of disciples? Did it not reveal lack of insight on His part? How could this mistake be reconciled with His Messianic claims? Peter solves the problem by showing that the betrayal happened in fulfilment of prophecy. "It was needful that the scripture should be fulfilled." The same line of argument is adopted by John in the Fourth Gospel, when he puts into the mouth of Christ the words, "Not one of them perished but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled" (John xvii. 12).

**which the Holy Ghost spake . . . concerning Judas.** In making this statement, Peter



adopts the view of prophecy that was current in his day. Just as the philosophers of Alexandria found predictions of their theories in the poems of Homer, so the Jews were accustomed to look for forecasts of recent events in the pages of the Old Testament. The Psalms which Peter cites could not have been written with the specific purpose of foretelling the action of Judas. They speak of treachery—but the treachery took place at the time of writing. Their language happens to suit the case of Judas, and so Peter uses it and calls it prophecy. We should call it an illustrative quotation.

18. There are two serious discrepancies between the accounts of the fate of Judas in Acts and Matthew (chap. xxvii. 5-8). (1) In Matthew Judas flings back the silver and it is the High Priests who buy the field. (2) The manner of death is quite different. In Matthew Judas commits suicide by hanging himself. Much ingenuity has been expended on attempts to reconcile the narratives, but with little success. Many scholars think that vers. 18, 19 are not part of Peter's speech, but a note of explanation inserted by the historian.

20. **in the book of Psalms.** The two quotations in this verse are taken from Ps. cix. 8 and Ps. lxix. 25.

**bishoprick** is misleading. "Office" is a better translation of the word in the original.

22. **a witness of his resurrection.** The first qualification for the office of Apostle is ability to give personal testimony with regard to the Resurrection. Cf. 1 Cor. ix. 2.

23. **they appointed two.** The selection was made by the community, not by the Apostles.

Democratic methods prevailed from the very start. Nothing definite is known about either of the men chosen. Tradition says they belonged to the seventy.

26. **they cast forth their lots.** The motive which induced them to resort to the lot was undoubtedly good. They wished to leave the final choice in the hands of God, and the casting of lots was sanctioned by Old Testament usage (Lev. xvi. 8 ; Num. xxxiv. 13). It was a mistake, however, to suppose that God could reveal His will more clearly through material methods, such as the casting of lots, than through the hearts and consciences of men, and the experiment does not seem to have been repeated in the history of the early Church.

#### Acts ii. 1-13.

#### THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT.

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were  
 2 all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there  
 came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind,  
 3 and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And  
 there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire,  
 4 and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with  
 the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as  
 5 the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling  
 at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under  
 6 heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude  
 came together, and were confounded, because that every  
 7 man heard them speak in his own language. And they  
 were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another,  
 8 Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans ? And how  
 hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were

9 born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the  
dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judæa, and Cappadocia,  
10 in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt,  
and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers  
11 of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians,  
we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful  
12 works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in  
13 doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others  
mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

“The promise of the Father” was realised a week after the Ascension at Pentecost. What was the real significance of Pentecost? The narrative before us seems to imply that it consisted mainly in the bestowal of a miraculous gift of speaking in foreign languages (cf. vers. 7, 8). Many modern scholars, however, feel that Luke’s interpretation is open to serious criticism, on the following grounds:—(1) There is no reference at all in the speech of Peter to such a miracle. (2) The power of speaking foreign languages would not have been likely to provoke the charge of drunkenness (ver. 13). (3) There was no necessity for such a miraculous endowment. The Greek language was known and spoken almost universally at the time, and was therefore quite sufficient for missionary work. (4) We know from Acts xiv. 8-14 that Paul was unable to converse in the language of Lycaonia, and we are told by Papias that Peter had an interpreter. (5) In 1 Corinthians the gift of “speaking with tongues” certainly does not refer to foreign languages, but rather to ecstatic utterances, especially in prayer to God, made under the influence of spiritual excitement (1 Cor. xii. 10, xiv. 2-28). (6) The other references in Acts to the gift of tongues afford no

hint that the power of speaking in foreign languages is meant (Acts x. 46, xi. 15, xix. 6).

These arguments seem absolutely unanswerable, but whether this is so or not, it is quite clear that the gift of tongues does not represent the essential element of Pentecost. The real significance of Pentecost lies in the fact that on that day the Christians in Jerusalem were clothed with new spiritual power and endowed with Divine strength for the task of evangelising the world. The nearest modern analogy to Pentecost is to be found in the memorable watch-night service which inaugurated the Evangelical Revival in 1739. John Wesley thus describes it in his *Journal*: "About three in the morning, as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, in so much that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell on the ground. As soon as we were recovered a little from that awe and amazement at the presence of His Majesty, we broke out with one voice, 'We praise Thee, O God; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.'" Before this meeting the preaching of Whitefield and Wesley had produced few results; almost immediately afterwards the most startling success attended it. An illustration such as this helps us to understand the significance of Pentecost to the early Church.

**1. the day of Pentecost.** The second of the three great feasts of the Jews, coming between the Feast of the Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles. It was called by the following names, which indicate its date and character:—(a) Pentecost, which means "fiftieth," because it was celebrated on the fiftieth day after the Passover; (b) the Feast

of Weeks (Ex. xxxiv. 22 ; Deut. xvi. 10), because a week of weeks, *i.e.* seven weeks, intervened between it and the Passover ; (c) the Feast of the Harvest (Ex. xxiii. 16), because it marked the close of the wheat harvest in Palestine ; (d) the day of the first-fruits (Lev. xxiii. 17 ; Num. xxviii. 26), because one of the great features of the festival was the offering of two loaves made from the wheat which had just been gathered in.

2. **as of a rushing mighty wind.** The "wind" and "the fire" (ver. 3) are metaphors. Luke does not speak of an actual wind and an actual fire, but uses these words to illustrate the action of the Spirit. Both metaphors are found in the Gospels in the same connection, the former in John iii. 8, the latter in Matt. iii. 11, 12.

3. **cloven tongues.** This is an incorrect translation of the Greek. The true rendering is, "there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire." It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the imagery used by Luke is derived from a Jewish legend, which has been preserved in Philo. According to this legend, when the Law was given at Sinai, an invisible voice came from the mountain, assumed the shape of a flame of fire, and issued from the flame transformed into the mother-tongues of the listeners. The fact that at the time when Luke wrote Acts the giving of the Law was definitely associated with the Feast of Pentecost, makes it improbable that the resemblance is accidental.

5. **out of every nation under heaven.** The Jews who lived in Palestine formed only a small fraction of the Jewish people. It is estimated that the Jews constituted about 7 per cent. of

the population of the ancient world, or about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  millions in all. Of these only about 700,000 lived in Palestine. The remainder were dispersed all over the world. Large numbers of them made pilgrimages to Jerusalem to keep the feasts. It is stated that there were often no less than two millions of people present at Jerusalem when one of the great festivals was being celebrated.

6. **when this was noised abroad.** The R.V., "when this sound was heard," is a better translation of the Greek.

9-10. The **Parthians** were an important people who lived in the country south of the Caspian Sea. Their kingdom extended from India to the Tigris. **Tedes.** Their country lay to the south-west of the Caspian Sea, between Parthia and Armenia. **Elamites.** They dwelt in the district known as Susiana, to the north of the Persian Gulf, between the Tigris and Persia. **Mesopotamia.** The district between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris. **Cappadocia** was situated on the eastern border of what we now call Asia Minor. **Pontus.** A district in the north-east of Asia Minor. **Asia.** In the New Testament the term Asia is used in a sense quite different from its present meaning. It never refers to the continent of Asia, but to the Roman province which was situated on the western coast-line of Asia Minor. **Phrygia.** A district to the west of Cappadocia. **Pamphylia.** A country on the south coast of Asia Minor. **Libya.** The ancient name for Africa. **Cyrene.** The capital of Cyrenaica, a district in the north of Africa, opposite to Greece.

11. **Cretes and Arabians.** These words were



probably added as an afterthought. Crete is a large island south-east of Greece.

**We do hear . . . in our tongues.** If the theory advocated in the introduction to this paragraph be correct, this exclamation must be a gloss added to the story by Luke or his informant.

**13. full of new wine.** Compare 1 Cor. xiv. 23, where Paul says that the effect produced by the gift of tongues on those outside the Church is to make them think that the Christians are mad.

Acts ii. 14-40.

**PETER'S FIRST GREAT SPEECH.**

- 14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice,  
and said unto them, Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell  
at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my  
15 words: for these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it  
16 is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was  
17 spoken by the prophet Joel; *And it shall come to pass in  
the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon  
all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
and your young men shall see visions, and your old men  
18 shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my hand-  
maidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and  
19 they shall prophesy: and I will shew wonders in heaven  
above, and signs in the earth beneath: blood, and fire, and  
20 vapour of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness,  
and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day  
21 of the Lord come: and it shall come to pass, that whoso-  
ever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

## 50 Westminster New Testament

22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words ; Jesus of Nazareth, a  
man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders  
and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as  
23 ye yourselves also know : him, being delivered by the  
determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have  
taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain :  
24 whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of  
death : because it was not possible that he should be holden  
25 of it. For David speaketh concerning him, *I foresaw the  
Lord always before my face ; for he is on my right hand,*  
26 *that I should not be moved ; therefore did my heart  
rejoice, and my tongue was glad ; moreover also my flesh*  
27 *shall rest in hope : because thou wilt not leave my soul in  
hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see cor-*  
28 *ruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life ;  
thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.*  
29 Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the  
patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his  
30 sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a  
prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath  
to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh,  
31 he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne ; he, seeing  
this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his  
soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corrup-  
32 tion. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are  
33 witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God  
exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of  
the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see  
34 and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens :  
but he saith himself, *The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit*  
35 *thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy foot-*  
36 *stool.* Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly,  
that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have cruci-  
37 fied, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this,  
they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and  
to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall  
38 we do ? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be



baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the  
39 Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the  
40 Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

These verses do not pretend to give a full and verbatim report of Peter's speech (see ver. 40), but merely a condensed summary of his line of argument. This makes the speech a little difficult to follow. Peter begins by repudiating the charge of drunkenness, and arguing that the Baptism of the Spirit is a fulfilment of Joel's prophecy (vers. 14-20). In order to substantiate this position, he finds it necessary to reply to a number of objections which would arise in the minds of his audience. (1) What right have you to connect yourselves and your Leader, Jesus, with Old Testament prophecy? The answer is, "Jesus was proved to have been sent by God by the miracles which He performed" (ver. 22). (2) But He was put to death. Does not that destroy His claims? "No," is the reply; "His death was part of the 'determinate counsel of God.' Besides, He has risen from the dead" (vers. 23, 24). (3) But how can you prove that He rose from the dead? "We have a threefold proof," Peter replies: "(a) the Resurrection was definitely predicted in the Psalms (vers. 25-31); (b) we ourselves were witnesses of it (ver. 32); (c) the Baptism of the Spirit is His work (ver. 33). 'Being exalted by [or rather 'to'] the right hand of the Father . . . he hath poured forth this.' " (4) What ground have you for asserting that He has been exalted to the Father?

"The clear witness of the 110th Psalm," is Peter's answer.

This speech is of immense value, because it contains, in concise form, an outline of the earliest Christian theology. We have here the first attempt to account for the personality of Jesus and the first explanation of His death.

**15. the third hour of the day.** *I.e.*, nine o'clock in the morning.

**17-21. I will pour out . . . of my Spirit.** This quotation is taken from Joel ii. 28-32. The following words are added by Peter: "in the last days, saith God," ver. 17 (the Hebrew says simply "afterward"); "and they shall prophesy," ver. 18; the words "above," "beneath," "and signs" in ver. 19.

**22. approved of God.** Accredited by God, proved to have come from God. The miracles of Christ, Peter argues, prove that He was sent by God.

**23. by the determinate counsel . . . God.** The death of Christ seems to have been a serious problem to the first generation of Christians. They were completely staggered by the tragedy on Calvary, and did not know how to account for it. All they could say was, "It is God's will and part of His eternal purpose" (cf. iv. 28). Some time elapsed before they were able to grasp the meaning of the Divine purpose, and see the connection between the death of Christ and the forgiveness of sins.

**25. David speaketh.** The quotation is from Ps. xvi. 8-11. The same words are used by Paul in his speech at Antioch, in Pisidia (chap. xiii. 35). We have here another instance of an argument

built on an illustrative quotation treated as prophecy. The author of the Psalm, whom Peter calls David, is giving utterance to a confident hope that after death God will not allow him to perish. He is speaking of himself throughout and of his own salvation. Peter, however, argues (vers. 29-31) that this could not have been the case, since the prophecy had not been fulfilled, as David himself had died and seen corruption; David must therefore have been referring to the resurrection of the promised Messiah. The argument is not valid for us, but it was valid at the time when it was uttered.

27. **in hell.** A misleading translation. The word in the original refers to the abode of the dead, not to the place of punishment. The R.V. makes the point clear by rendering "in Hades."

29. **his sepulchre . . . unto this day.** This statement is borne out by Josephus, who gives an account of two attempts to rifle the tomb of David; one by John Hyrcanus (about 135 B.C.), who took out of it 3000 talents, the other by Herod the Great, who found no money, but seized a quantity of golden vessels. The same argument is used by Paul at Antioch (chap. xiii. 35-37).

34. A quotation from Ps. cx. 1. This Psalm is frequently used in the New Testament as an argument in support of the claims of Jesus to be the Messiah. Christ Himself employed it against the Pharisees (Matt. xxii. 43). It is cited also by Paul in 1 Cor. xv. 25 and the Epistle to the Hebrews i. 13, x. 13. In the quotation "The Lord" refers to God, and "my Lord" (*i.e.*, David's Lord) represents "the Messiah." The phrase therefore means, "God said to the Messiah, 'Sit thou,' " etc.

36. **God hath made . . . both Lord and Christ.** This verse contains the first interpretation of the Person of Christ. Peter speaks of Christ as "a man approved by his miracles and signs" (ver. 22) whom God had made Lord and Messiah. This is known to theologians as the Adoptionist Theory. Jesus, according to this view, was a man who was afterwards raised to the rank of Divinity by God. We must always remember, however, that though this is clearly the first, it is not on that account necessarily the final and correct explanation of Christ. See also x. 38 and xiii. 33.

38. **Repent, etc.** Peter lays down three conditions for entrance into the Christian fellowship: (1) Repentance; (2) Baptism; (3) Belief in Jesus as Messiah and Lord.

39. **To all that are afar off, etc.** These words are an echo of expressions found in Joel ii. 32 and Isa. lvii. 19. We have here the first allusion to the fact that God was about to call men even from amongst the Gentiles (*i.e.*, those afar off; cf. Eph. ii. 13).

#### Acts ii. 41-47.

### THE FIRST ACCOUNT OF THE COMMON LIFE.

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized:  
 and the same day there were added unto them about three  
 42 thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the  
 apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread,  
 43 and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and  
 44 many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And

all that believed were together, and had all things common ;  
45 and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to  
46 all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing  
daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread  
from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and  
47 singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with  
all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily  
such as should be saved.

As a result of Peter's address and the outpouring of the Spirit, the little company of believers was augmented by the addition of no less than 3000 converts, and in this paragraph we have an account of the Common Life of the new community. We gather (1) that as yet there had been no separation from the Jews. The Christians were constant in their attendance at the Temple (ver. 46). (2) They supplemented the Temple worship by holding meetings of their own in private houses for fellowship, prayer, teaching, and a common meal (ver. 46). (3) They sold their property and distributed the money to all who were in need (ver. 45). (4) They were animated with a strong sense of unity and fellowship, and their hearts were filled with awe and triumphant joy (vers. 43, 46). For the second account of the Common Life see chap. iv. 32-37.

**41. three thousand souls.** This is the second reference to the number of believers. The 120 of Acts i. 15 has grown into 3000.

**42. the apostles' doctrine.** R.V., "apostles' teaching" is a better translation. The new converts required instruction, and this is what is meant. Doctrine in our sense of the word can hardly be said to have existed at this point.

**breaking of bread.** This phrase is used several times in the New Testament to describe

the common meal which culminated in the Lord's Supper (Acts xx. 7, 1 Cor. x. 16). The Communion Service in early times was always connected with the social meal, or Agape, as it was called.

**43. And fear came upon every soul.** The word rendered "fear" would be better translated by "awe." The phrase denotes the awe felt by the whole community at the manifestation of Divine Power at Pentecost and in the mighty deeds of the Apostles.

**44. had all things common.** The new impulse, which had been produced by the sense of awe described in the previous verse, created such a feeling of brotherhood that the wealthier members of the Christian community felt it incumbent on them to share their property with the needy brethren. We have no grounds for supposing that a definite socialistic system was established. We know that the principle was never made absolute. Barnabas, for instance, is singled out for special praise later on because he sold his field (chap. iv. 36-37). The sin of Ananias and Sapphira did not consist in their refusal to hand over to the Church the money which they received from the sale of their possessions, but in their act of deception (chap. v. 4). See n. on iv. 32.

**46. continuing daily with one accord in the temple.** There had been as yet no breach between Christianity and Judaism. The Christians still took part in the Temple services. It was not till after the martyrdom of Stephen that the rupture occurred.

**from house to house.** Literally "at home." The more specifically Christian meetings could not be held in the Temple. Hence it was necessary



to meet in private houses. The use of private houses for Christian worship continued up to the end of the second century, when special buildings began to be erected.

**with gladness and singleness of heart.** Gladness and joy are the dominant notes of the new faith, in striking contrast to the pessimism and cynicism which characterised the current philosophy and religion of the time. The word translated "singleness" also means "liberality," and the phrase probably contains an allusion to the generosity which marked the feelings and actions of the members of the first Christian community.

47. **And the Lord added to the church,** etc. There are two important changes in the R.V., the one due to a change in the Greek Text, which omits the words "to the church," and substitutes "to them" or "together," the other due to a correction in the translation. The words "such as should be saved" quite misrepresent the original, which means "those that were being saved." Hence the true rendering of the verse is, "And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved."

### Acts iii. 1-10.

#### THE FIRST MIRACLE.

Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at  
2 the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour: and a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;

## 58 Westminster New Testament

3 who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple  
4 asked an alms. And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him  
5 with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto  
6 them, expecting to receive something of them. Then  
Peter said, Silver and gold have I none ; but such as I  
have give I thee : In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth  
7 rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand,  
and lifted him up : and immediately his feet and ancle  
8 bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and  
walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking,  
9 and leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw  
10 him walking and praising God : and they knew that it  
was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the  
temple : and they were filled with wonder and amazement  
at that which had happened unto him.

The incident described in these verses occurred on one of the occasions alluded to in ii. 46, when the Christians went up to the Temple to pray. It is given as an illustration of "the many signs and wonders" which were wrought by the Apostles (ii. 43). A similar miracle was worked by St. Paul at Lystra (xiv. 8-10).

**1. the hour of prayer . . . the ninth hour.**  
3 p.m.—the hour of evening sacrifice. We know from Acts x. 9 that Peter also observed the sixth hour (12 noon) as a time of prayer. Probably at this time the Jews had three specified hours of prayer—the third, the sixth, and the ninth ; cf. Ps. lv. 17 ; Dan. vi. 10.

**2. gate . . . which is called Beautiful.**  
Josephus speaks of one gate of the Temple which excelled all the others in beauty. It was made of Corinthian brass and adorned in a most costly manner, having much richer and thicker plates of silver and gold than the rest. It was 50 cubits



high and was approached by a flight of fifteen steps, whereas the others were only 40 cubits and had only ten steps (*Wars of the Jews*, v. 5, § 3). The exact position of the gate is a matter of dispute. It may have been either an outer gate or, as seems more probable, a gate leading from the Court of the Women into the Court of Israel.

4. **fastening his eyes upon him.** One of the graphic touches which give a sense of reality to the narrative. "In this chapter," as Dr. Lumby says, "we have a description such as a painter would desire; the scene is brought vividly before us, and all the characters are in lively action."

6. **In the name of Jesus Christ.** The formula "in the name" is frequently used to denote "the authority" or "power" of the person named. Among pagans the utterance of the name of a god was supposed to exercise a magic power, but there is nothing magical about the use of the phrase in the New Testament. Special sanctity was attached to the name of Jesus because it summed up in a single word the essence of the gospel (Matt. i. 21; Phil. ii. 9).

7. **his feet and ancle bones.** We have in this phrase one of those technical details which go to prove that the author of Acts was a physician; compare Acts xxviii. 8.

### Acts iii. 11-26.

#### PETER'S SECOND SPEECH.

11 And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch

## 60 Westminster New Testament

12 that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. And when  
Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel,  
why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us,  
as though by our own power or holiness we had made this  
13 man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and  
of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son  
Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the  
presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.  
14 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a  
15 murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince  
of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we  
16 are witnesses. And his name through faith in his name  
hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea,  
the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect  
17 soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren,  
I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your  
18 rulers. But those things, which God before had shewed  
by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should  
19 suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and  
be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when  
the times of refreshing shall come from the presence  
20 of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which  
21 before was preached unto you: whom the heaven  
must receive until the times of restitution of all things,  
which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy  
22 prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said  
unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise  
up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye  
23 hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And  
it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear  
that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.  
24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that  
follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise fore-  
25 told of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets,  
and of the covenant which God made with our fathers,  
saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the  
26 kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God,

having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

This speech was delivered within the precincts of the Temple to a concourse of people who had been drawn together owing to the excitement created by the miracle. It may be divided into two parts. In the first half Peter explains that the miracle had been wrought by the power of Christ. The Jews had indeed rejected Him and crucified Him, but God had glorified Him (vers. 11-16). In the second half Peter makes excuses for the conduct of the people towards Christ. Their action was the result of ignorance, and the death of Christ was necessary, moreover, for the fulfilment of prophecy. In spite of the Crucifixion, there was still hope for them, if only they would repent—for Christ would then reappear on the earth and inaugurate the Messianic era of which the prophets had spoken (vers. 17-26).

This second address shows a considerable advance in thought upon the first. (*a*) Peter adopts a much more conciliatory tone towards the Jewish populace. (*b*) He definitely connects the death of Christ with the fulfilment of prophecy. (*c*) He lays great emphasis upon the second coming of Christ, an idea which had not been mentioned in his earlier address.

11. the porch which is called Solomon's. The walls of the outer court of the Temple were surrounded on the inside by porticoes or cloisters. The cloisters on the eastern side were known by the name of "Solomon's porch"; compare John x. 23; Acts v. 12.

13. hath glorified his Son Jesus. The

word translated "Son" is not the term usually employed, but is one which is often found in the Old Testament with the meaning of "servant." It is in fact the title used of "the Servant of God" so often mentioned in the second part of Isaiah (cf. Isa. xlii. 1, 19, xliv. 1, lii. 13, etc.). Hence the R.V. translates "hath glorified his Servant Jesus." Peter, in using the word, claims that Christ fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy of "the Servant of God." glorified, viz., by exhibiting His power in the working of the miracle.

**when he had determined to release him.** Cf. Luke xxiii. 22; John xix. 4. According to the Gospel narratives, Pilate made repeated efforts to save Jesus. See n. on iv. 27.

**14. desired a murderer.** Barabbas, who, according to Mark xv. 7 and Luke xxiii. 19, had raised an insurrection and committed murder. Observe the fine contrast which is drawn in this verse between Christ the life-giver and Barabbas the life-destroyer. The Jews had chosen "the murderer" and rejected the Prince (or Author) of Life.

**15. killed the Prince of life.** The word translated "Prince" is rendered "author" in Heb. xii. 2 ("the author and finisher of our salvation"), and also in Heb. ii. 10 ("the author of their salvation"), and some such word as "author" or "inaugurator" seems required in the present passage and in Acts v. 31.

**17. in ignorance ye did it.** Observe the conciliatory tone adopted by Peter, and compare the words of Christ, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

**18. But those things, etc.** The correct

translation is given by the R.V., "But the things which God foreshewed by the mouth of all the prophets that his Christ should suffer." The death of Christ is here explained as a fulfilment of the prophecies as to the suffering which it would be necessary for the Messiah to undergo. This is a considerable advance upon the explanation given in ii. 23.

**19. Repent.** This verse marks the transition to the second part of the speech. Hitherto Peter has dealt with the past—now he turns to the future. The crime of the Jews is not irremediable. There is still an opportunity of repentance, and repentance will mean the advent of the Messianic age.

**when the times.** This should be as in the R.V., "that the times." The advent of the new age is conditioned by the repentance of Israel.

**the times of refreshing.** This is probably a technical expression employed to describe the Messianic age—the golden future to which Israel was always looking. This age—when the Messiah came again—would be a season of spiritual refreshing, or as the Greek word sometimes signifies, of peace and rest.

**20. And he shall send.** This translation is wrong, because it is based on an inaccurate Greek Text. The R.V. is therefore to be preferred, "that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus," or a better rendering still would be, "that he may send Jesus your destined Messiah." We have here the first reference in Acts to the belief which occupied such an important place in the thought of the early Church, that Jesus was speedily to reappear upon the earth.

**21. until the times of restitution.** Another technical expression describing a particular aspect or characteristic of the Messianic age. The prophecy of "a new heaven and a new earth" had been familiar since the time of the Exile (cf. the great passage in Isa. lxxv. 17-25), and the thought was afterwards elaborated in the later Apocryphal and Apocalyptic writings, especially in the Book of Enoch, Fourth Ezra, and the Apocalypse of Baruch. Jewish thought in the first century A.D. maintained that the Messianic age would be marked by (1) a renovated and restored world, (2) a renovated and restored humanity; and it is this belief which is in Peter's mind when he speaks of "the times of restoration." A similar view is found in Paul; cf. Rom. viii. 18-22. It need scarcely be pointed out that the phrase has no connection at all with the modern theory of universal Restoration.

**22. A prophet shall the Lord your God.** This quotation is taken from Deut. xviii. 15, 19, and the quotation in ver. 25 ("and in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed") from Gen. xxii. 18.

**26. Unto you first.** A reference to the inclusion of the Gentiles. Cf. Rom. i. 16: "To the Jew first and also to the Greek."

**having raised up.** This phrase is used with the same meaning as in ver. 22: "A prophet shall the Lord . . . raise up." There is no reference to the Resurrection.

**his Son Jesus.** As in ver. 13, "Servant" should be substituted for "Son," as in the R.V.



## Acts iv. 1-12.

## THE FIRST ARREST OF THE APOSTLES.

And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, 2 being grieved that they taught the people, and preached 3 through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next 4 day : for it was now eventide. Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed ; and the number of the 5 men was about five thousand. And it came to pass on the 6 morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes, and Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the 7 high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By 8 what power, or by what name, have ye done this ? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye 9 rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by 10 what means he is made whole ; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here 11 before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the 12 corner. Neither is there salvation in any other : for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Hitherto the authorities had been quiescent. They doubtless thought that the execution of Jesus would kill the movement, and even the events on the day of Pentecost had failed to shake their confidence. The miracle and Peter's speech



in the Temple, however, proved that their hopes were vain, and showed them that further steps were necessary. Hence the arrest. The initiative was taken by the priests and the Sadducees. In the Gospels it is the Pharisees who are the most bitter foes of Jesus, in the Acts the Sadducees play the leading part in the attack. The reason is obvious. The doctrine of the Resurrection was specially obnoxious to the Sadducees, and roused them to hostility.

The paragraph gives an account of (1) the arrest of the Apostles (vers. 1-4); (2) the meeting of the Council (vers. 5, 6); (3) Peter's speech in defence (vers. 7-12).

**1. the captain of the temple.** The superintendent of the Temple guard, which was composed of priests and Levites. He was not a military officer but a priest, and only held office while his particular section of the Levites was on duty.

**the Sadducees.** The priests and the Sadducees were warm allies, and are constantly found acting together in opposition to the Apostles (see v. 17). The Sadducees at this time formed the most wealthy, aristocratic, and influential section of the Jews. They differed from the Pharisees (1) in their rejection of tradition; (2) in their disbelief in the future life, cf. xxiii. 8; (3) in their disbelief in angels and spirits. The explanation of their hostility to the Apostles is stated in ver. 2, "Being grieved that they taught . . . the resurrection from the dead."

**3. put them in hold till the next day.** No meeting of the Council could be held after sunset, and so the trial had necessarily to be postponed to the next day.

4. **about five thousand.** This is the third reference to the number of believers. The 3000 of ii. 41 has grown to 5000, and the increase is greater than the difference between these two figures, because the latter number refers only to men, and takes no account of women or children.

5. **rulers and elders and scribes.** This verse describes the meeting of the Council, or Sanhedrin, as it was called. The Council was an ecclesiastical Court of 70 or 71 members. It was composed of (1) the rulers or high priests, who were generally Sadducees; (2) the scribes, who belonged to the Pharisees; (3) the elders, who might be either priests or laymen. Its functions extended over all matters connected with public worship and the administration of Jewish law. It was therefore the supreme ecclesiastical and legal authority in Jerusalem.

6. **Annas the high priest.** There is a difficulty about this statement. The actual High Priest at the time was Caiaphas, who held office from 18-36 A.D. Annas had been deposed in 14 A.D., after holding the position for seven years. The mistake, however, if it is a mistake, is more technical than real. There is no doubt that Annas, though deposed from office, was still "the power behind the throne." Four of his sons had succeeded him in the position, and Caiaphas was his son-in-law. It is a significant fact that in the Gospel of John (xviii. 13) Jesus is said to have been tried before Annas first.

The names **John and Alexander** may possibly be the Greek equivalents for Jonathan and Eleazar, who were ex-High Priests and sons of Annas.

8. **filled with the Holy Ghost.** The writer of Acts constantly emphasises the abiding power and influence of the Holy Spirit. We have here, too, a fulfilment of the promise of Christ, "When they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak" (Matt. x. 19).

11. **This is the stone.** The words are taken from Ps. cxviii. 22. They were used by Christ in reference to His rejection (Mark xii. 10), and are quoted in 1 Pet. ii. 7. An interesting light has been thrown upon the metaphor by Sir William Ramsay. The quarries in different parts of the world belonged to the Roman Empire. Every block of stone that was quarried was inspected by the proper officer and marked by him as approved. At the Phrygian marble quarries many blocks have been found, bearing the letters REPR. These letters are an abbreviation for the Latin word *reprobatum*, which means "rejected" (Ramsay, *Pauline Studies*, p. 253). The leaders of the Jews had rejected Christ as a stone unfit for a place in the temple of humanity, but God had reversed their verdict, and made Him the "chief stone of the corner," i.e., the stone at the angle which holds the two sides together.

12. **in none other is there salvation.** Peter's reply goes beyond the question put to him, By what power have ye done this? and adds the remarkable words of this verse. Not only was Jesus the power which worked the miracle, but He was the sole and only hope of Salvation for Israel.

## Acts iv. 13-22.

## THE ACQUITTAL.

13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they  
14 had been with Jesus. And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against  
15 it. But when they had commanded them to go aside out  
16 of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them  
17 that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in  
18 this name. And they called them, and commanded them  
19 not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more  
20 than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the  
21 things which we have seen and heard. So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for  
22 all men glorified God for that which was done. For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

The trial of the two Apostles issued in a verdict of acquittal. The result is rather surprising, but the explanation is not far to seek. The Council had not the courage to face the unpopularity which would have been aroused if it had proceeded to extreme measures, and so it let "I dare not" wait upon "I would."

**13. boldness.** The Greek word means "freedom of utterance."

**unlearned and ignorant men.** This phrase does not necessarily mean uneducated. It refers rather to the fact that the Apostles were unversed in Law and the teaching of the Schools—in other words, they were not professional theologians, like the scribes and Rabbis on the Council.

**they took knowledge of them.** The Council was at first puzzled to understand how it was that untrained men could speak with such freedom on the deepest questions of religion. The difficulty, however, vanished when they remembered that they “had been with Jesus.”

**15. they conferred among themselves.** The members of the Council were anxious to find some way of suppressing Peter and John without offending the people. The same hesitation to run counter to public opinion is seen in the action of the Sanhedrin towards Jesus; cf. Luke xx. 6, xxii. 2.

**16. we cannot deny it.** If Luke’s account can be regarded as a fair representation of what took place at the Council (and his information may have come from Paul, who was probably a member of the Council at the time), the fact of the miracle was recognised even by Peter’s opponents as being beyond dispute.

**17. that it spread no further.** The Council was genuinely afraid of the development of the new movement. It knew how susceptible the people of Jerusalem were to the appeals of leaders who claimed Messianic powers. There had been many conflicts in recent years between upstart fanatics and the Roman Government. An effort must therefore be made at any rate to keep the movement within bounds.

18. **charged them not to speak.** The verdict practically meant that Peter and John were dismissed with a caution.

20. **we cannot but speak.** The Apostles refused to be silenced, in spite of the threats of the Jewish leaders, who had only a few weeks before compassed the doom of Jesus, and would not hesitate, when opportunity offered, to deal out the same fate to them.

21. **finding nothing how they might punish them, etc.** Here we have the key to the Council's vacillation and the explanation of its inaction.

22. **above forty years old.** A graphic detail, which would naturally be of special interest to a physician like Luke. Physical defects which can be successfully treated in youth are much more difficult to cure when the patient has reached middle life.

#### Acts iv. 23-31.

#### THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH.

23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto  
24 them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea,  
25 and all that in them is: who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, *Why did the heathen rage, and the people*  
26 *imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord,*  
27 *and against his Christ.* For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel,



28 were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand  
 29 and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now,  
 Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy  
 servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,  
 30 by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and  
 wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.  
 31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where  
 they were assembled together; and they were all filled  
 with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God  
 with boldness.

The crisis produced by the arrest of the Apostles and the threats of the Council drove the Church to prayer. We need not suppose that the prayer recorded in this passage gives the actual words used at the meeting. It is highly probable that Luke or his informant has summarised into a single form the gist of very many prayers which were offered on this memorable occasion.

24. **Lord, thou art God.** The word used for "Lord" in the Greek is unusual—*despotes*, from which the English "despot" is derived. It means "absolute sovereign," or "supreme potentate." It only occurs in a few other passages; *e.g.*, Luke ii. 29; 2 Pet. ii. 1; Jude 4; Rev. vi. 10.

25. **by the mouth of thy servant David.** The Greek Text is a little uncertain here. The rendering in the R.V. is, "who by the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of our father David thy servant, didst say."

**Why did the heathen rage?** An illustrative quotation taken from Ps. ii. 1, 2.

27. **against thy holy child Jesus.** "Child" should be "servant"; see n. on iii. 13.

**Herod** = Herod Antipas, who put John the Baptist to death (Mark vi. 14-29), and after



mocking Jesus, handed Him to Pilate (Luke xxiii. 8-11).

**Pontius Pilate.** The Roman governor of Palestine from 26 to 36 A.D., who, after several attempts to save Jesus, finally yielded to the Jews' desire to put Him to death. See n. on iii. 13.

**28. whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined.** The same explanation of the Crucifixion is found in ii. 23 (see note).

**29. grant unto thy servants.** "Servants" in the Greek is "bond-slaves." There is an intentional contrast between this expression and the description of God as "absolute sovereign" in ver. 24.

**that with all boldness.** The prayer is two-fold: (1) for courage to preach in face of the threats of the Council; (2) that God may work more miracles. In ver. 30 **child** should be "servant," as in ver. 27.

**31. they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.** This verse records the way in which the prayer was answered. God sent a second Pentecost, and a second baptism of the Spirit.

### Acts iv. 32-37.

#### THE SECOND ACCOUNT OF THE COMMON LIFE.

32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul : neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own ; but they had all  
33 things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus : and great  
34 grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among

them that lacked : for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things  
 35 that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet :  
 and distribution was made unto every man according as he  
 36 had need. And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed  
 Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of con-  
 37 solation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having  
 land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the  
 apostles' feet.

The first account of the Common Life is given in ii. 41-47. At first sight it appears as if the second account were a mere repetition of the first. But, as Dr. Hort has pointed out, when we look beneath the surface of the narrative, there are signs of an important advance. In the first account the distribution is indiscriminate and unmethodical. Men sold their goods and distributed the proceeds themselves. In the present passage those who disposed of their property are represented as bringing the money to the Apostles, and so making them the treasurers and relieving officers of the community. We have thus here the first beginnings of Church organisation. Doubtless the unregulated charity described in ii. 41-47 had resulted in abuses, and it was to remedy this that the Apostles were appointed superintendents of the Church finances.

**32. were of one heart and soul.** A strong phrase, denoting the complete sense of unity which prevailed in the Christian community.

**they had all things common.** See n. on ii. 45. The Christians were not the first discoverers of the ideal of the Common Life. It had been the dream of Plato in his vision of the Ideal Republic, and even among the Jews an attempt had been

made on a small scale, by a sect known as the Essenes, to establish communities on this basis. The Essenes lived together in groups, and shared common meals, and had a common purse.

**34. Neither was there any that lacked.** Jerusalem was always notorious for the amount of poverty that prevailed amongst the lower classes. There were two reasons for this. (1) The people were to a considerable extent pauperised by the ecclesiastical charities. Almsgiving had been elevated by the Pharisees into one of the most important acts of religion. (2) Jerusalem lived very largely on the immense crowds of visitors who came from all parts of the world to keep the great Festivals. It had no commerce or trade of its own, and the absence of regular employment made life difficult and precarious for the poor. We must remember, too, that many of the poorer members of the Church had by the very fact of becoming Christians lost the financial support they formerly received from the Pharisees and Sadducees.

**as many as were possessors of lands, etc.** As has been pointed out in the note on ii. 45, (a) the sale of property was absolutely voluntary. No compulsion—except the compulsion of the Spirit and the contagion of example—was laid on anyone; cf. v. 4. (b) It was not absolutely universal; cf. xii. 12, where Mary the mother of Mark is described as owning a house.

**35. distribution was made, etc.** The motive behind the sale of goods was not the desire to create a socialistic system, but to relieve the necessities of the poor—"according as he had need."

**36. And Joses = Joseph.** The case of Barnabas

is introduced as an illustration of the sacrifices made by individuals in the interests of the Brotherhood.

**surnamed Barnabas.** The name of a man was of much greater significance amongst the Jews than it is in modern times. Hence it was not unusual for an adult to receive an additional surname in keeping with his character or employment. It was only natural, therefore, that a man's conversion to Christianity should be signalled by the bestowal of a new name; cf. Matt. xvi. 17, 18.

**son of consolation.** The word rendered "consolation" may also be translated "exhortation." In the Greek it is connected with the same root as Paraclete—the title bestowed on the Holy Spirit in the Fourth Gospel, and on the Risen Christ in the First Epistle of John (ii. 1). It is possible that this title may suggest that Barnabas was in a special degree a Spirit-filled man, a kind of Paraclete to the Church. Whether it was bestowed upon him for his preaching (cf. xi. 23), or for his power of sympathy and general helpfulness, is a point which cannot be determined.

**a Levite.** *I.e.*, of a Levitic family, which, however, had migrated to Cyprus.

**of the country of Cyprus.** There was a large colony of Jews in Cyprus. In the time of Trajan they organised a revolt, and massacred no less than 240,000 of the pagan inhabitants (116 A.D.). Because of its large Jewish population, Cyprus was selected as one of the earliest fields of missionary work; cf. xi. 19, xiii. 1-12.

## Acts v. 1-11.

## THE SIN AGAINST BROTHERHOOD.

But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife,  
2 sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his  
wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and  
3 laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why  
hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and  
4 to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it  
remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was  
it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this  
thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto  
5 God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and  
gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that  
6 heard these things. And the young men arose, wound  
7 him up, and carried him out, and buried him. And it  
was about the space of three hours after, when his wife,  
8 not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter  
answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for  
9 so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. Then Peter  
said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to  
tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them  
which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall  
10 carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his  
feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came  
in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her  
11 by her husband. And great fear came upon all the church,  
and upon as many as heard these things.

By way of contrast to Barnabas, who was selected as a representative of the true spirit of the Christian Brotherhood, Luke now proceeds to tell the story of two others—Ananias and Sapphira—who through selfishness committed a sin against the Brotherhood and lost their lives in consequence. It must be

admitted that this narrative of the deaths of Ananias and his wife raises many difficulties. To explain it as a miraculous intervention of God seems on ethical and theological grounds to be out of the question. To explain it as a natural event, the sudden deaths being due to the excitement caused by the discovery of the deception, is also scarcely possible. The death of one of the offenders might be accounted for in that way, but surely not the death of both. We seem, therefore, to be reduced to a choice of the following hypotheses:—(1) We may say that the story is exaggerated. Probably one death occurred, and this was magnified into two. (2) The word “death” was used in two senses by the early Christians. It might mean physical death, or it might mean spiritual death. When the story was first told, it narrated the spiritual death of Ananias and Sapphira. Their act of selfishness ruined them, and they were lost to the Brotherhood. In process of time, however, spiritual death was changed into physical death, and when the narrative came into the hands of Luke, the theory of a physical death had been so well established that in describing the fate of Ananias and Sapphira he uses language which is perfectly unambiguous, and from which all traces of what really happened have been obliterated.

**2. kept back part of the price.** They were anxious, evidently, to gain a reputation for generosity, and yet unwilling to make the necessary sacrifice.

**3. to lie to the Holy Ghost.** The action of Ananias was something more than a crime against the community—it was a sin against the Holy



Spirit, who was the impelling force from which the conception of the Common Life had arisen.

4. **Whiles it remained**, etc. This verse proves that there was no absolute obligation on Ananias to sell his possessions, or even to bring the money derived from the sale to the Apostles.

5. **gave up the ghost**. *I.e.*, expired. The word used is an unusual one, and is only found in ver. 10 and xii. 23.

6. **the young men**. This phrase suggests that the distinction between "the elders" who presided over the community and the "young men" who carried out their instructions had already been made. Elders are first mentioned in xi. 30.

7. **came in**. The Church seems to have been holding a meeting at the time.

9. **shall carry thee out**. In the case of Ananias, Peter did not threaten death or show any sign that he expected it to happen. In this case, however, he clearly foretells Sapphira's fate, even if he does not imprecate it upon her.

11. **the whole church**. This is the first instance of the use of the word "church" in Acts, since the word is not found in the true Greek Text of ii. 47. It is a significant fact that the word is first applied to the Christian community by Luke in connection with the account of the Common Life.

#### Acts v. 12-32.

### THE SECOND ARREST OF THE APOSTLES.

12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people ; (and they were all  
13 with one accord in Solomon's porch. And of the rest durst



## 80 Westminster New Testament

no man join himself to them : but the people magnified  
14 them. And believers were the more added to the Lord,  
15 multitudes both of men and women ;) insomuch that they  
brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on  
beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter  
16 passing by might overshadow some of them. There came  
also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem,  
bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with un-  
17 clean spirits : and they were healed every one. Then the  
high priest rose up, and all they that were with him,  
(which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with  
18 indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles, and  
19 put them in the common prison. But the angel of the  
Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them  
20 forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the  
21 people all the words of this life. And when they heard  
that, they entered into the temple early in the morning,  
and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were  
with him, and called the council together, and all the  
senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to  
22 have them brought. But when the officers came, and  
found them not in the prison, they returned, and told,  
23 saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and  
the keepers standing without before the doors : but when we  
24 had opened, we found no man within. Now when the high  
priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests  
heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this  
25 would grow. Then came one and told them, saying,  
Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the  
26 temple, and teaching the people. Then went the captain  
with the officers, and brought them without violence : for  
they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.  
27 And when they had brought them, they set them before  
28 the council : and the high priest asked them, saying, Did  
not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in  
this name ? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your  
doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We  
 30 ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our  
 fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a  
 31 tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a  
 Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and  
 32 forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these  
 things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath  
 given to them that obey him.

We commence at this point a new section which has no immediate connection with the preceding paragraph. This section contains (*a*) a short summary of the events which led up to the second arrest (vers. 12-16); (*b*) the account of the arrest (vers. 17, 18); (*c*) the miraculous release of the Apostles (vers. 19, 20); (*d*) the meeting of the Council (vers. 21-25); (*e*) the re-arrest (vers. 26-28); (*f*) Peter's defence (vers. 29-32).

**12. many signs and wonders.** Another general statement with regard to the miracles wrought by the Apostles; cf. ii. 43.

**and they were all,** etc. The A.V. is quite right in putting this and the following clauses in brackets. They break the sense of the passage. Ver. 15 follows immediately after the first half of ver. 12.

**in Solomon's porch.** See n. on iii. 11. The Christians were still attending the Temple services.

**13. And of the rest.** It is difficult to see who are meant by "the rest." The best explanation is that Luke is drawing a contrast between "the rest" and "the people" mentioned in the next clause. It refers, therefore, to "the classes," as opposed to "the masses"; *i.e.*, to the rulers, priests, scribes, etc.

**join himself.** The Greek word used here

denotes "to attach oneself to." Many of "the classes" sympathised with the Christians, but did not dare to publicly associate themselves with them.

**14. multitudes both of men and women.** In previous references (see n. on iv. 4) Luke has been able to give the numbers of the converts. But the additions to the Church are now so numerous that statistics are impossible, and the word "multitudes" is the only term that suffices to describe them.

**15. at least his shadow.** The success of Peter and John roused a feeling of superstition in the minds of the people. Luke does not, however, in this passage suggest that there were any grounds for the superstition, or state that any cures resulted from it—as in the parallel cases related in xix. 12.

**17. the high priest.** Probably Annas is meant, though Caiaphas was the actual High Priest. See n. on iv. 6.

**the sect of the Sadducees.** As in the case of the first arrest, the Sadducees are found playing the principal part in the attack; see iv. 1.

**19. an angel of the Lord.** It is one of the characteristics of Luke to dwell on angelic appearances, and the miraculous deliverances wrought by them; cf. viii. 26, xi. 13, xii. 7-10.

**20. the words of this life.** R.V., "Life" with a capital letter, because it was one of the terms used to describe both Christ and the religion which He founded. Compare the use of the similar term "the Way," which is employed on several occasions in the Acts to describe Christianity; cf. ix. 2.

**21. the council and all the senate.** Probably "the senate" is simply another name for "the council," and it would be better to translate

"the council, **even** all the senate." The repetition is perhaps due to the desire of Luke to emphasise the fact that it was a full meeting of all the members of the Council, and not a small committee.

**24. Now when the high priest.** The best Greek Text omits "the high priest." **captain of the temple.** See n. on iv. 1.

**whereunto this would grow.** The Greek words mean simply "as to what this could mean."

**26. for they feared the people.** Cf. iv. 21. The Council was always afraid to act counter to popular opinion.

**28. Did not we straitly command?** This refers to the commands issued by the Council at the former trial (iv. 18).

**29. We ought to obey.** Better, "We must obey." Compare Peter's answer to the Council at the first trial (iv. 19, 20).

**30. raised up.** It is not quite clear whether these words refer to the Resurrection or whether they are used in a general sense, as in iii. 26.

**slew and hanged on a tree.** This is a misleading rendering, as it seems to suggest that the Jews slew Jesus before they crucified Him. The R.V. is better, "whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree."

**31. a Prince.** See n. on the words "Prince of life" in iii. 15.

**a Saviour.** Observe that the saving power of Christ is here connected, not with His death, but with His ascension and exaltation. It is the exalted Christ who gives "repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins."

## Acts v. 33-42.

## THE PLEA OF GAMALIEL.

33 When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took  
34 counsel to slay them. Then stood there up one in the  
council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law,  
had in reputation among all the people, and commanded  
35 to put the apostles forth a little space ; and said unto them,  
Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend  
36 to do as touching these men. For before these days rose up  
Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody ; to whom a  
number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves :  
who was slain ; and all, as many as obeyed him, were  
37 scattered, and brought to nought. After this man rose up  
Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away  
much people after him : he also perished ; and all, even as  
38 many as obeyed him, were dispersed. And now I say unto  
you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone : for if  
this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to  
39 nought : but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it ; lest  
40 haply ye be found even to fight against God. And to him  
they agreed : and when they had called the apostles, and  
beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak  
41 in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed  
from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were  
42 counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily  
in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach  
and preach Jesus Christ.

Help came to the Apostles from an unexpected quarter. Gamaliel, one of the most venerated Rabbis of the day, a man held in universal esteem and honour, rose in the Council and opposed the proposal that Peter and John should receive the same doom as their Master. "Let them alone,"

he pleaded; "if this work be of men, it will be overthrown; but if it is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them." Though the speech as reported by Luke contains a serious anachronism (see n. on Theudas), we have no grounds for doubting the general accuracy of the account which is given of Gamaliel's intervention.

**34. a Pharisee.** The first allusion to the Pharisees in this book. Throughout Acts the Pharisees are represented as being more or less favourable to Christianity. In xv. 5 it is stated that "some of them believed."

**Gamaliel.** The most famous Jewish teacher of the day, and the first of the Jewish Rabbis to receive the higher and more affectionate title of Rabban ("our Master"). He was the grandson of Hillel, the founder of the more liberal school of Jewish thought. The Apostle Paul was trained "at his feet" (xxii. 3). So great was his reputation, that, according to the Mishna, "with the death of Gamaliel the reverence for the Law ceased, and purity and abstinence died away."

**a doctor of the law.** An official teacher and exponent of the Jewish Law. The Jewish Code regulated life even down to its minutest details, and it was the duty of the Rabbi to interpret its enactments and apply them to the changed circumstances of the times in which he lived.

**36. Theudas.** The case of Theudas is one of the most serious difficulties in Acts. According to Josephus, the revolt of Theudas occurred under the Procuratorship of Cuspius Fadus, between 44 and 46 A.D.; *i.e.*, at least ten years later than the date at which the speech of Gamaliel is supposed to have been delivered. The account which Josephus



gives of the event is as follows: "Now it came to pass while Fadus was Procurator of Judæa, that a certain magician, whose name was Theudas, persuaded a great part of the people to take their effects with them and to follow him to the river Jordan. For he told them that he was a prophet, and that he would by his own command divide the river and afford them an easy passage over it: and many were deluded by his words. However, Fadus did not permit them to take any advantage of his wild attempt, but sent a troop of horsemen out against them, who, falling upon them unexpectedly, slew many of them and took many of them alive. They also took Theudas alive, and cut off his head and carried it to Jerusalem" (*Antiquities*, xx. 5. 1). If the Theudas of Josephus and the Theudas of Acts are the same person, Luke is guilty of the serious mistake of making Gamaliel allude in his speech to an event which did not happen till ten years later. The only way in which the historicity of Luke's statements can be maintained is by denying the identity of the two men and asserting that the Theudas mentioned by Gamaliel is quite different from the Theudas who figures in the pages of Josephus. The difficulty about this explanation is that Gamaliel's Theudas was evidently a well-known man, and it is hardly likely that no reference would have been made to him in Josephus.

**37. After this man.** Another difficulty, at least, on the assumption of the identity of the Theudas of Acts and the Theudas of Josephus. The date of Theudas is, as we have seen, about 44 to 46 A.D. The date of Judas is fixed by the



expression "in the days of the taxing," between the years 6-8 A.D., and yet the rising of Judas in 6-8 A.D. is spoken of as subsequent to the rising of Theudas in 46-48 A.D. It is a strange coincidence that Josephus mentions Theudas and Judas in close connection and in the same order as Luke, though he does not make the blunder about their relative dates. Some modern scholars suppose that Luke derived his information from Josephus, and made the mistake through carelessness, being misled by the fact that the account of Judas' revolt followed that of Theudas. The similar collocation of the names may, however, be purely accidental.

**Judas of Galilee.** From the notices in Josephus, who mentions Judas on four separate occasions, we gather that at the time when the second Roman census was being taken by Quirinius, Judas reproached the Jews with cowardice, induced not a few of them to refuse to make any returns with regard to their property, and headed a revolt against the Romans. No information is given, however, as to the course of the revolt or the fate of its leader. According to Josephus, Judas was the founder of a new party, known as the Zealots, which openly advocated a policy of armed resistance to the Roman rule.

**in the days of the taxing.** R.V., "enrolment." This refers to the second Roman census of Palestine, which took place in 6-7 A.D. The first was made just before the birth of Christ; see Luke ii. 2.

**38. Refrain from these men.** The opposition of the Pharisees, as we have seen, had weakened since the Crucifixion. In Acts xv. 5 we are told that "certain of them believed." There is no

## 88 Westminster New Testament

evidence, however, to show that Gamaliel ever embraced the Christian Faith. His attitude is that of a detached onlooker who is willing to give the new movement a chance of vindicating itself.

**39. if it be of God.** The test which Gamaliel proposes to apply is that enunciated by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount: "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. vii. 16).

**40. when they had . . . beaten them.** This marks an advance upon the decision at the first trial, when the Apostles were dismissed with a caution (iv. 21).

**42. daily in the temple.** The connection with the Temple was still maintained. See n. on ii. 46.

**preach Jesus Christ.** The R.V. rendering is better, "preach Jesus as the Christ." The great theme of the preaching was "Jesus is the Christ (or Messiah)."

### Acts vi. 1-7.

#### THE APPOINTMENT OF THE FIRST OFFICERS.

And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected  
2 in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve  
3 tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and

4 wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But  
we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the  
5 ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole  
multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith  
and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and  
Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a pro-  
6 selyte of Antioch: whom they set before the apostles:  
and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.  
7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the  
disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great  
company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

We reach here a new point in the development of the Church, viz., the beginning of a definite organisation. This passage should be linked on to the two accounts of the Common Life (ii. 41-47, iv. 32-37). The evolution had already passed through two phases. In the first stage we find absolutely no trace of any organisation at all. The distribution of gifts was made by the donors themselves. In the second stage, the Apostles are found discharging the duty of almoners (see notes on iv. 32). The present paragraph represents the third stage. The Apostles find that the task is too burdensome, and ask the Church to appoint seven special men for the work. The particular office to which "the Seven" were appointed is a matter of dispute. There are three theories. (a) The traditional view identifies them with deacons, and regards this narrative as an account of the origin of the diaconate. There are, however, some very forcible objections to this view. The word "deacon" is not mentioned in the passage, nor indeed in the Acts. It occurs for the first time in Paul's Epistle to the Philippians i. 1.

Moreover, there is no evidence that "the Seven" were ever identified with the deacons till towards the close of the second century. (*b*) Others suppose that they represent the office of presbyter or elder, which is frequently mentioned in Acts (see xi. 30). (*c*) Others, again, regard them as a temporary committee appointed for a definite purpose, and think that as the idea of the Common Life died away, they ceased to exist.

It is difficult to decide between these views. We may say this, however—though no actual connection between "the Seven" and the later deacons can be proved, the action of the Church in appointing these men created a precedent which must have fostered and may even have occasioned the development of the diaconate.

1. **Grecians.** This translation is misleading. The men alluded to were not Greeks but Jews of a particular type. Roughly speaking, the Jews may be divided into two classes: (1) the Hebrews, or those Jews who maintained their own national tongue, used the Hebrew Bible, and refused to adopt un-Jewish manners and customs; (2) the Hellenists, who lived for the most part outside Palestine (see n. on ii. 5), spoke the Greek language, used a Greek Bible—the Septuagint, as it was called, and conformed, at any rate in non-essentials, to the habits of the people among whom they lived. It is the latter class which is referred to here under the term "Grecians." The R.V. removes the misconception by translating "Grecian Jews." The two classes were always more or less at enmity, and it seems clear that the Hebrew Christians inherited the old animosity, and were somewhat reluctant to admit the Hellenists into the

Church on equal terms. Hence "the murmuring." The action of the Church, however, represents a decision that the Hellenists, no less than the Hebrews, were to receive complete recognition and a full share of all the privileges of the Christian Brotherhood.

**2. the multitude of the disciples.** Another illustration of the democratic character of the early Church. The Apostles do not claim authority over the Church, but leave the decision in the hands of the disciples.

**serve tables.** This phrase may be used in two senses. (1) The tables may be those on which the common meal was served, and the phrase would then refer to the duties connected with the distribution of food. (2) The tables may be those at which the contributions of the Church were received and disbursed. Cf. "the tables of the money-changers" (Matt. xxi. 12), and the reference would then be to the management of the Church finances.

**3. seven.** The number seven was chosen partly because of its sacred associations and partly too, no doubt, because it seems to have been the usual number adopted by the Jews when appointing committees of management for the public business of the towns.

**full of the Holy Ghost.** The best MSS. omit "Holy," and so the R.V. translates "full of the Spirit." Observe that though these men are appointed for business purposes, the highest qualifications are regarded as necessary.

**whom we may appoint.** The choice was made by the people, the definite act of appointment by the Apostles.

**5. Stephen . . . Nicolas.** Stephen and Philip

are the only members of "the Seven" who achieved fame. Nothing is known about the other five, though some, without any justification, have identified Nicolas with the founder of the sect of the Nicolaitans (Rev. ii. 6).

**a proselyte.** *I.e.*, one who had been converted to Judaism.

**Antioch.** See n. on xi. 22.

**6. they laid their hands upon them.** "The laying on of hands" was a symbolical act among the Jews: cf. Gen. xlviii. 15; Num. viii. 10; Deut. xxxiv. 9. It was used by the Jews on various occasions—"Chiefly," as Dr. Hatch says, "in the appointment of members of the local courts, in admitting a scholar to study and in giving him authority to teach—in the ceremony, in other words, which corresponds to our graduation." There is no warrant for the theory that "the laying on of hands" was supposed to convey supernatural grace. For other uses of the phrase in Acts see viii. 17, ix. 17, xiii. 3, xix. 6, xxviii. 8.

**7. a great company of priests were obedient.** A proof of the progress which Christianity was making in Jerusalem. The constant attendance of the Christians at the Temple services and the speeches of Peter in Solomon's porch had evidently impressed the priests and won many of them over to Christianity.

### Acts vi. 8-15.

#### THE PREACHING OF STEPHEN.

8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders  
9 and miracles among the people. Then there arose certain  
of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the



Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them  
10 of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they  
were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which  
11 he spake. Then they suborned men, which said, We  
have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses,  
12 and against God. And they stirred up the people, and  
the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and  
13 caught him, and brought him to the council, and set up  
false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak  
blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law :  
14 for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth  
shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs  
15 which Moses delivered us. And all that sat in the council,  
looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the  
face of an angel.

From the account of the appointment of the Seven, Luke passes on to describe the work of Stephen—the most important of the new officers. The significance of Stephen can scarcely be overestimated. His preaching marks the most decisive advance that had as yet been taken by the Church. Hitherto the Christian community had been bound up in the closest way with the Jews. In the era before Stephen, Christianity was practically a Jewish sect, like Pharisaism, for instance. The only point of separation was the distinctive belief that Jesus was the Messiah. It was Stephen who in the first instance saved the Church from remaining a mere branch of Judaism, and struck the first note of Universalism. He asserted that Christianity was independent of the Temple and of the Law, and must not be confined within the narrow channels of Jewish custom and belief. This audacious utterance brought him into collision not only with the authorities, but with



the people as well, and finally resulted in his martyrdom.

**9. the synagogue of the Libertines.** The Libertines were probably Jewish prisoners of war (or their children) who had been taken captive to Rome, but had been subsequently set at liberty. Upon their return to Jerusalem they seem to have formed a synagogue of their own.

It is uncertain whether the five classes of people mentioned in this verse belonged to one synagogue. Some scholars think there is a reference to five separate synagogues. This may easily be the case, because we know that there were no less than 480 synagogues in Jerusalem. Others, again, suppose that three synagogues are alluded to, the first belonging to the Libertines, the second to the Cyrenians and Alexandrians, the third to those who had come from Cilicia and Asia.

**Cyrenians.** See n. on ii. 9. **Alexandrians.** Alexandria, the famous city founded by Alexander the Great, was the capital of Egypt, and was renowned at this period for its University, which was one of the most important centres of learning in the ancient world.

**Cilicia.** A district to the south-east of what is now known as Asia Minor. Its capital was Tarsus, the birthplace of the Apostle Paul.

**disputing with Stephen.** It should be noted that all these synagogues (that is, if we assume that there was more than one) belonged to the Hellenists. Stephen's mission seems to have been principally directed to them, and they, strangely enough, proved far more hostile to Christianity than the Hebrews.

**11. They suborned men.** "To suborn" means

“to procure,” but the word is almost always used in a bad sense. The witnesses twisted the words of Stephen, and asserted that he had blasphemed Moses and God.

**12. they stirred up the people.** Hitherto the people had favoured the work of the Apostles, but the opponents of Christianity, trading on the words of Stephen, stirred up their prejudices, and so for the first time in Acts we find them siding with the authorities.

**13. blasphemous words, etc.** The charge brought against Stephen was that he had attacked the Temple and the Law. The words which he actually used may probably be deduced from vii. 48, 49.

**this holy place.** The Council met within the precincts of the Temple buildings.

**14. Jesus . . . shall destroy this place.** The success which this accusation had met with when it was brought against Christ (Mark xiv. 58) no doubt led to its repetition in the case of Stephen.

**15. the face of an angel.** This beautiful little graphic touch was probably derived from Paul, who was present on the occasion (vii. 58, xxii. 20).

### Acts vii.

#### STEPHEN'S GREAT APOLOGY.

It is not easy to follow the argument of Stephen's speech, because two lines of thought are interwoven, and sometimes one and sometimes the other assumes the chief place. There can be little doubt that the main theme is to be found in vers. 48, 49.

Stephen defends his assertion that true religion is independent of the Temple and the Law, by an appeal to history. He shows (*a*) that long before either Temple or Law existed, God had made a covenant with Abraham; (*b*) that He had revealed Himself to Joseph and Moses in Egypt when they were far away from the sacred city of Jerusalem; (*c*) that He had been with Israel during their time of wandering in the wilderness, and had accepted their worship; (*d*) that even when the Temple was built by Solomon it was distinctly stated in the prayer of dedication that the presence of God was not restricted within its walls.

Running side by side with this main theme, however, there is a subsidiary line of thought. Stephen shows from the history of the past that there had been men in every age who, like his accusers, persecuted the prophets and resisted the new revelation of truth which they brought to the world. This line of argument comes to the front in vers. 25-29, 39-43, 51-53.

The speech may be divided into the following sections:—(1) The dealings of God with the patriarchs as illustrating the universality of true worship (vers. 1-16). (2) The story of Moses as illustrating the unwillingness of men to receive the Divine deliverance (vers. 17-43). (3) The building of the Temple and Stephen's final appeal (vers. 44-53).

## I. GOD'S DEALINGS WITH THE PATRIARCHS (vii. 1-16).

Then said the high priest, Are these things so? And he  
2 said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of  
glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in

3 Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred,  
4 and come into the land which I shall shew thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran : and from thence, when his father was dead, he  
5 removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on : yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as  
6 yet he had no child. And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land ; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four  
7 hundred years. And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God : and after that shall they  
8 come forth, and serve me in this place. And he gave him the covenant of circumcision : and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day ; and Isaac  
9 begat Jacob : and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs. And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt :  
10 but God was with him, and delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt ; and he made him governor over  
11 Egypt and all his house. Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction :  
12 and our fathers found no sustenance. But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers  
13 first. And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren ; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto  
14 Pharaoh. Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls.  
15 So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our  
16 fathers, and were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem.

In the opening section the emphasis is laid upon the fact that God's dealings with the patriarchs

were absolutely unconnected not merely with the Temple, but even with the Holy Land itself. Stephen, like Paul in later times (cf. Rom. iv.; Gal. iii.), goes back behind the Law and the priesthood to the time of Abraham, and grounds his position upon the undeniable facts connected with the religious experience of the great founder of the Jewish people.

2. **The God of glory.** Compare with this unusual expression the similar phrases, "the King of glory" (Ps. xxiv. 9) and "the Lord of glory," which is applied to Christ (1 Cor. ii. 8; Jas. ii. 1). When the word "glory" is used of God it generally carries with it the idea of Divine manifestation. The phrase, therefore, is most appropriate in the present connection, because Stephen is speaking of the Divine manifestation to Abraham.

**appeared . . . in Mesopotamia.** These words are emphatic. The point is, of course, that God's manifestation to Abraham took place in a foreign land, and not in the Temple at Jerusalem.

**before he dwelt in Charran.** There is a discrepancy between this statement and Gen. xii. 1-5, where it is said that the call came to Abraham after he had left Charran. There is another tradition which has been preserved in Philo and Josephus, and is implied in Gen. xv. 7; Josh. xxiv. 2,3; Neh. ix. 7, that the call came to him at Ur of the Chaldees. Stephen seems to have followed this tradition in preference to the statement of Gen. xii. 1-5.

**Charran** (or Haran, as it is spelt in the R.V.). A city in the N.W. of Mesopotamia, and S.E. of Edessa, where Abraham lived after leaving Ur of the Chaldees (Gen. xi. 31).

**3. Get thee out of thy country.** This verse forms part of the promise made by God to Abraham (Gen. xii. 1, 2). In Genesis the promise continues: "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless them that bless thee," etc.

**4. when his father was dead.** According to the facts stated in the Book of Genesis, Terah lived for sixty years after Abraham's departure from Charran (Gen. xi. 26, 32, xii. 4). The version given by Stephen appears also in Philo. The modification in the tradition was due probably to the desire of the Jews to save Abraham from the imputation of unfilial conduct.

**he removed him.** he = God.

**5. gave him none inheritance.** According to Gen. xxiii. 13, Abraham purchased a field from the sons of Heth. There is no discrepancy, however, because the emphasis is here laid on the word "gave."

**6. And God spake.** The quotation in this verse is substantially in agreement with the words recorded in Gen. xv. 13, 14.

**four hundred years.** This is a round number, and there is no discrepancy between it and the more precise figure—430—which is given in Ex. xii. 40 and Gal. iii. 17.

**9. sold Joseph into Egypt.** In keeping with his main argument Stephen hurries over the history of the patriarchs in Palestine. His point all through this part of the speech is to show how God revealed Himself in foreign lands.

**14. threescore and fifteen souls.** The Hebrew and Greek versions of the Old Testament differ as to the precise number, the former



giving it as 70, the latter as 75. Stephen follows the Greek, with which as a Hellenist he would, of course, be more familiar.

16. **Sychem**=Shechem. There are two irreconcilable discrepancies between this verse and the statements in Genesis. (a) According to Gen. xlix. 30 and l. 13, Jacob was buried "in the cave of Machpelah, before Mamre," and not at Shechem, as is stated here. (b) The piece of land at Shechem, purchased from the sons of Hamor (=Emmor), was bought, according to Gen. xxxiii. 19, by Jacob, and not by Abraham. The same variation from the received text of Genesis is also found in the apocryphal Book of Jubilees, and this is no doubt the source of Luke's statement here.

The reference to the burial of Jacob, which seems at first sight absolutely irrelevant, is probably introduced to prove that the patriarchs possessed no land in Palestine except the burying-ground.

the sons of **Emmor** the father of **Sychem**. The best MSS. read here, "the sons of Hamor in Shechem," and this is the rendering in the R.V.

## STEPHEN'S GREAT APOLOGY—(*continued*).

### II. THE HISTORY OF MOSES (vii. 17-43).

- 17 But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God  
 had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in  
 18 Egypt, till another king arose, which knew not Joseph.  
 19 The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil



entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young  
20 children, to the end they might not live. In which time  
Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up  
21 in his father's house three months: and when he was  
cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished  
22 him for her own son. And Moses was learned in all the  
wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in  
23 deeds. And when he was full forty years old, it came into  
24 his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. And  
seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and  
avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian:  
25 for he supposed his brethren would have understood how  
that God by his hand would deliver them: but they under-  
26 stood not. And the next day he shewed himself unto  
them as they strove, and would have set them at one again,  
saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to  
27 another? But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him  
away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?  
28 Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?  
29 Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the  
30 land of Madian, where he begat two sons. And when  
forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the  
wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame  
31 of fire in a bush. When Moses saw it, he wondered at the  
sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the  
32 Lord came unto him, saying, I am the God of thy  
fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and  
the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not  
33 behold. Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes  
from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy  
34 ground. I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my  
people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning,  
and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I  
35 will send thee into Egypt. This Moses whom they refused,  
saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did  
God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the  
36 angel which appeared to him in the bush. He brought

them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in  
 the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilder-  
 37 ness forty years. This is that Moses, which said unto the  
 children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God  
 raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him  
 38 shall ye hear. This is he, that was in the church in the  
 wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the  
 mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively  
 39 oracles to give unto us: to whom our fathers would not  
 obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned  
 40 back again into Egypt, saying unto Aaron, Make us gods  
 to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us  
 out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of  
 41 him. And they made a calf in those days, and offered  
 sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their  
 42 own hands. Then God turned, and gave them up to  
 worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of  
 the prophets, *O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me*  
*slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the*  
 43 *wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch,*  
*and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made*  
*to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond*  
*Babylon.*

In the second section of Stephen's speech the  
 main point of the argument seems to change. The  
 history of Moses is narrated chiefly for the purpose  
 of proving that the Jews had always resisted and  
 rejected the Divinely appointed deliverer (see  
 especially vers. 24-26). The opponents of Christ  
 had their representatives in the time of Moses.  
 But though this is undoubtedly the dominant  
 note of the passage, yet the other line of thought  
 is by no means absent. Great stress is laid, for  
 instance, upon the fact that it was "in the  
 wilderness of Mount Sina," and not in Palestine,

that the revelation came to Moses in the burning bush.

**17. had sworn to Abraham.** The best MSS. read "had vouchsafed to Abraham."

**22. was learned in all the wisdom.** A better translation is, "was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." Jewish tradition asserts that the king of Egypt had no son, and that Moses as the adopted son of his daughter was destined to be his successor on the throne. Hence he received the best education in the philosophy for which Egypt was always famous.

**23. to visit his brethren.** The parallelism between Moses and Christ which is so clearly brought out in this and the following verses is evidently intentional, and may be regarded as the real point of the passage. Moses, Stephen argues, in his day was treated by his brethren just as Christ had been treated by the men whom He came to save.

**29. the land of Madian.** Madian = Midian, the district which comprised, or included, at any rate, the peninsula of Mount Sinai.

**begat two sons.** See Ex. xviii. 2-4. Their names were Gershom and Eliezer.

**30. there appeared unto him.** The account is taken from Ex. iii. 2-10.

**Sina.** The more usual form of spelling is "Sinai."

**33. holy ground.** This expression is emphatic, and the words are obviously introduced to prove that "holy ground" is not confined to Palestine.

**35. whom they refused.** Stephen selects this particular point of the narrative for further em-

phasis, in order to drive home the argument which he has been basing on the parallelism between Moses and Christ.

**37. A prophet.** This quotation, which is taken from Deut. xviii. 15, is used by Stephen to reinforce his argument. Observe the emphatic phrase "like unto me," which corroborates from prophecy the resemblance between Christ and Moses.

**38. This is he.** The "he" refers to Moses. Cf. the commencement of ver. 37.

**the church in the wilderness.** The translation "church" is misleading. There is no allusion to the Christian Church. The words refer to "the congregation of Israel." The Greek term is used in several senses, and "church" is only one of its meanings. The phrase simply means, "Moses was with the congregation of Israel during its sojourn in the wilderness."

**the lively oracles.** "Lively" is a word which has changed its meaning. When the Authorised Translation of the Bible was made, it was used as a synonym for "living." Cf. 1 Pet. ii. 5, "lively stones;" 1 Pet. i. 3, "lively hope." The R.V. gives the right meaning by translating "living oracles." "The oracles" refer to the commandments of the Law which Moses received from God. They are described as "living" because they impart life.

**39. thrust him from them.** A further illustration of the same stubborn spirit of resistance on the part of the people.

**40. saying unto Aaron.** The quotation is taken from Ex. xxxii. 1.

**42. to worship the host of heaven.** The

worship of the heavenly bodies was a common form of paganism, into which the religion of Israel often showed a tendency to degenerate (2 Kings xvii. 16; Jer. viii. 2, xix. 13).

**in the book of the prophets.** The quotation is from Amos v. 25, 26. The twelve Minor Prophets were regarded by the Jews as one book. The passage is cited as an illustration of the spirit of stubborn rebellion which was characteristic of the Jews. The point, however, is a little obscure in the English translation. The second part of the quotation, viz. ver. 43, is in contrast to the first. "Did ye offer sacrifices to me? Nay, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch," etc.; *i.e.*, "Instead of worshipping me, ye resorted to idolatry."

**43. Moloch and Remphan.** The special type of idolatry of which the Israelites were guilty is uncertain. According to the Septuagint, which Stephen quotes, the gods worshipped in the wilderness were Moloch, the god of the Ammonites, who was propitiated by the sacrifice of children (Lev. xx. 2-5), and Remphan (or Rephan), which seems to be a Babylonian title for Saturn. When we turn to the Hebrew Bible, however, we find different names given. The translation of the passage as given in the R.V. of Amos is as follows: "Ye have borne Siccuth your king and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves." "Siccuth" and "Chiun" are the names of Babylonian deities.

**beyond Babylon.** Both the Hebrew and Septuagint read "beyond Damascus." The substitution of "Babylon" for "Damascus" may be due to a slip of memory, or it may be an intentional

correction of Amos, since Babylon was the actual place of exile.

### STEPHEN'S GREAT APOLOGY—(*continued*).

#### III. THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE AND STEPHEN'S FINAL APPEAL (vii. 44–53).

44 Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen :  
 45 which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of  
 46 David ; who found favour before God, and desired to  
 47 find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. But Solomon  
 48 built him an house. Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands ; as saith the prophet,  
 49 *Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool : what house will ye build me ? saith the Lord : or what is the*  
 50 *place of my rest ? Hath not my hand made all these*  
 51 *things ?* Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost : as your fathers  
 52 did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted ? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One : of whom ye have  
 53 been now the betrayers and murderers : who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

The third section of Stephen's speech deals with the building of the Temple, and shows that the Temple was never intended to monopolise the presence of God. The speech ends with a passionate appeal to the Jews not to follow the



example of the fathers in rejecting the prophets sent by God. Thus the two lines of thought which run side by side through the speech are blended together in the peroration.

**44. the tabernacle of witness** (or, "the testimony," R.V.). Cf. Ex. xxxviii. 21. The name was given to the Ark because all its contents were a testimony of God's power and wisdom.

**in the wilderness.** These words are emphatic. Though the Ark was in the wilderness, and not in the Holy City, it yet was the token of God's abiding presence with His people.

**speaking unto Moses, etc.** See Ex. xxv. 9, 40, xxvi. 30, xxvii. 8.

**45. brought in with Jesus.** "Jesus" here means "Joshua." The name "Jesus" is the Greek equivalent for the Hebrew "Joshua."

**into the possession of the Gentiles.** A misleading translation. The R.V. gives the true meaning of the original: "when they entered on the possession of the nations."

**unto the days of David.** It is not quite certain what this phrase refers to. It may mean (1) that the Jews made use of the Ark up to the time of David, or (2) that God drove out the nations up to the time of David; *i.e.*, the conquest of Palestine was not completed till David's time.

**46. asked to find a habitation.** See 2 Sam. vii. 2-17.

**48. the most High dwelleth not, etc.** We reach in this clause the climax of the speech—the great conclusion towards which the argument has been constantly progressing. The quotation which follows is taken from Isa. lxvi. 1, 2.



**51. Ye stiffnecked.** This verse marks the commencement of Stephen's closing appeal. The phrases "stiffnecked" and "uncircumcised in heart" had often been applied to the Jews by prophets in the past: for the former, see Ex. xxxii. 9, xxxiii. 3-5; for the latter, Lev. xxvi. 41; Jer. vi. 10; Ezek. xliv. 7.

**52. Which of the prophets, etc.** Compare 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16, "They mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and scoffed at his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose . . . till there was no remedy."

**the Just One.** The same title is bestowed on Christ in iii. 14, xxii. 14. It is used as a name of the Messiah in the apocryphal Book of Enoch.

**53. by the disposition of angels.** R.V., "as it was ordained by angels." The Old Testament says nothing about angels at the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai—though the Septuagint in Deut. xxxiii. 2 adds the following phrase: "on his right hand were angels." In later Jewish tradition, however, angels were introduced into the story as intermediaries between God and Moses. Josephus, for instance, says: "We have learned from God the most excellent of our doctrines and the most holy part of our law by angels." The same tradition appears also in the apocryphal Book of Enoch. This tradition was evidently accepted by Stephen. It is also found in two other passages in the New Testament: (1) Heb. ii. 2, "The word spoken through angels;" (2) Gal. iii. 19, "The law was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator."

Acts vii. 54-viii. 3.

THE MARTYRDOM OF STEPHEN.

54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart,  
 55 and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being  
 full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven,  
 and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right  
 56 hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens  
 opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of  
 57 God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped  
 58 their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast  
 him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses  
 laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name  
 59 was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God,  
 60 and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he  
 kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not  
 this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he  
 1 fell asleep. And Saul was consenting unto his death.  
 And at that time there was a great persecution against the  
 church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all  
 scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and  
 2 Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried  
 Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over  
 3 him. As for Saul, he made havock of the church, enter-  
 ing into every house, and haling men and women com-  
 mitted them to prison.

The only effect of Stephen's speech was to increase the storm of indignation against him. "Cut to the heart," the crowd took the law into their own hands, and without waiting to obtain Pilate's consent, carried Stephen outside the walls of the city and there stoned him to death. The proceedings were absolutely irregular, as capital punishment could not be inflicted without the consent

of the Roman Procurator. The martyrdom, though probably engineered by the Council, was actually the work of the Jewish mob, and there was no pretence at judicial process at all. The narrative is significant, because it records the first appearance of Saul of Tarsus.

**54. cut to the heart.** The phrases "cut to the heart" and "gnashed their teeth" illustrate the fury into which the mob had been thrown by the speech of Stephen.

**55. looked up stedfastly.** There is an intentional contrast drawn here between the wild action of the mob and the calm, peaceful faith of Stephen. Amid all the whirling panic Stephen alone was quiet and self-possessed, his soul full of the vision of the Risen Lord.

**56. the Son of man.** This phrase, which is so familiar in the Gospel narrative and was so often used by Jesus, does not occur as a title of Christ in the New Testament outside the Four Gospels except in this passage.

**58. cast him out of the city.** In obedience to Lev. xxiv. 14, "Bring him forth . . . without the camp."

**witnesses laid down their clothes.** By the Mosaic Law (cf. Deut. xvii. 7) the witnesses were bound to cast the first stones. They laid aside their garments in order that their arms might be free.

**whose name was Saul.** Saul was evidently one of the ringleaders of the attack. The statements of Acts with regard to Saul's zeal as a persecutor are in keeping with what we find in the Epistles: cf. Phil. iii. 6; Gal. i. 13. Saul is here called a "young man," but the word used

is sometimes applied to a man of forty. Saul must have been between thirty and forty at the time.

**59. calling upon God.** There is no word for "God" in the original, and as the following words show that the prayer was addressed to Christ, it is better to translate, "calling upon the Lord," *i.e.* Christ.

**60. lay not this sin.** These words recall the prayer of Christ on the Cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii. 34).

**viii. 1. Saul was consenting.** Cf. the statement of Paul in xxii. 20, "When the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death."

**a great persecution.** Now that the mob was alienated from Christianity, it was possible for its opponents to organise a systematic attack upon it, and no time was lost in commencing the persecution.

**were all scattered abroad.** This dispersion, which at first seems so disastrous, was in reality the cause of the expansion of the Church. Out of it came the mission to Samaria (viii. 1-5) and the movement at Antioch (xi. 19).

**3. Saul laid waste the church.** See n. on vii. 58. Compare also Paul's own statements in xxii. 3-5, xxvi. 10, 11. We gather from the latter passage that Saul was a member of the Sanhedrin at the time.

## Acts viii. 4-13.

## PHILIP'S MISSION TO SAMARIA.

4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where  
5 preaching the word. Then Philip went down to the city  
6 of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the  
people with one accord gave heed unto those things which  
Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he  
7 did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came  
out of many that were possessed with them: and many  
8 taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. And  
9 there was great joy in that city. But there was a certain  
man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used  
sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out  
10 that himself was some great one: to whom they all gave  
heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is  
11 the great power of God. And to him they had regard,  
because that of long time he had bewitched them with  
12 sorceries. But when they believed Philip preaching the  
things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of  
Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.  
13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was  
baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, behold-  
ing the miracles and signs which were done.

Up to this point Christianity has been confined to Jerusalem and its immediate neighbourhood. We reach now the fulfilment of the second point in the Divine programme of Christianity as laid down by Christ before His Ascension: "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (i. 8). The mission to Samaria was not a deliberately planned movement. It was the result of the dispersion which followed the martyr-

dom of Stephen. Stephen effected by his death what he evidently longed to achieve in his life—the expansion of the Church. Very few facts are given with regard to Philip's work. Luke's main interest is in Simon Magus, and the important rôle assigned to him is allowed to obscure the significance of the mission as a whole.

4. **went every where.** There is no word for "everywhere" in the Greek. The original simply says "went about preaching the word."

5. **Philip** was one of "the Seven;" see vi. 5. Beyond the statements in this chapter, little is known about him, except that he afterwards lived with his four daughters at Cæsarea, where he was visited by Paul (xxi. 8, 9). Luke was with Paul on the occasion of this visit, and so probably obtained the information about the mission to Samaria directly from Philip himself. In xxi. 8 Luke appropriately describes him as "Philip the evangelist."

**city of Samaria.** The capital city of the district known as "Samaria." Herod had given the name of "Sebasté" to it.

**preached Christ.** The translation of the R.V. is better, "proclaimed unto them the Christ" (*i.e.*, the Messiah). That the Samaritans, like the Jews, were looking for a Messiah is clearly proved by John iv. 25.

9. **Simon by name.** The name of Simon Magus figures largely in later tradition. Justin Martyr, for instance, describes him thus: "After the Ascension of our Lord certain men suborned by demons said that they were gods. . . . Simon, a certain Samaritan, was one of the number who in the reign of Claudius Cæsar performed many magic rites by the aid of demons." Other writers regard



Simon as the father of heresy and the arch-opponent of Christian truth. The present passage proves (1) that Simon was a sorcerer (hence his name "Magus"), (2) that he claimed Divine powers.

**10. This man . . . of God.** The true Greek Text reads, "This man is that power of God which is called Great." The idea that lies at the back of this expression is as follows:—God possessed many attributes and powers: one of these powers was singled out as "the power *par excellence*," and Simon was supposed to be the Incarnation of this power of God. The Samaritans regarded Simon Magus somewhat in the same way as the Fourth Gospel regards Christ. Simon Magus is described as the Incarnation of the Power of God—Jesus as the Incarnation of His Word.

**13. Simon himself believed also.** Belief is of different types. The belief of Simon was similar to the belief of the Jews as described in John viii. 31—a belief which did not prevent them from plotting Jesus' death. Simon was evidently attracted by "the wonders" wrought by Philip, which outmatched the achievements of his own sorcery. His so-called conversion simply amounted to a recognition of the fact that Christ could work greater wonders than could be wrought by the magician's art.

Acts viii. 14-25.

### THE VISIT OF THE APOSTLES TO SAMARIA.

14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto



15 them Peter and John : who, when they were come down,  
prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost :  
16 (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them : only they  
17 were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid  
they their hands on them, and they received the Holy  
18 Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the  
apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them  
19 money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whom-  
20 soever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But  
Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because  
thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased  
21 with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this  
matter : for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.  
22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if  
perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.  
23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and  
24 in the bond of iniquity. Then answered Simon, and said,  
Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things  
25 which ye have spoken come upon me. And they, when  
they had testified and preached the word of the Lord,  
returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many  
villages of the Samaritans.

The mission of Philip had not been authorised by the Church at Jerusalem, and consequently when the tidings of Philip's success reached the Apostles, Peter and John were commissioned to visit Samaria for the purpose of investigating the character of the work and determining how far it ought to receive recognition at Jerusalem. A similar process was adopted in connection with Antioch when Barnabas was appointed as commissioner (xi. 22). The Apostles apparently, if we are to trust the picture in Acts, played the part of critics rather than initiators. No forward movement is ascribed to them. The initiative always comes

from outside. The two chief points of interest in the paragraph are (1) the account of the Samaritan Pentecost (vers. 14, 15),—observe how the work in Samaria, just as in Jerusalem, receives its Baptism of Spiritual Power ; (2) the account of Simon's folly.

**14. they sent Peter and John.** Peter and John were sent to Samaria as the delegates of the Apostles, partly to examine and partly to encourage the work in Samaria.

**15. receive the Holy Ghost.** Another proof of the tremendous importance which was attached to the work of the Holy Spirit. The mission in Samaria could not hope to succeed without a Pentecost.

**17. laid their hands on them.** See n. on vi. 6. Ver. 18 seems to imply that Luke connected the Baptism of the Spirit with the laying on of hands.

**18. Simon . . . offered them money.** Simon's conduct proves how inadequate his faith had been. He was so impressed by the Baptism of the Spirit, which he thought had been produced by the Apostles, that he was anxious to purchase the power of conferring the same gift.

**23. thou art in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity.** The expressions used in this phrase are borrowed from the Old Testament. For the former, compare Deut. xxix. 18, "lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood," and for the latter, Isa. lviii. 6, "to loose the bonds of wickedness." There is some little difficulty about the translation. Three renderings are possible. (1) As in the text. This implies that Simon is already in the condition represented by the phrases used. (2) As in the margin of the R.V., "Thou wilt become gall (or a gall root) of bitter-

ness." In this case the condition is represented as future. (3) "Thou art as the gall of bitterness," where the phrases represent a comparison. The second translation seems most appropriate, because it aptly describes the bitter hostility which Simon afterwards showed towards Christianity.

24. **Pray ye therefore.** If later tradition is to be trusted, this prayer was never answered. Simon became the arch-opponent of Christianity.

#### Acts viii. 26-40.

#### THE CONVERSION OF THE ETHIOPIAN.

26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying,  
Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth  
27 down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And  
he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an  
eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the  
Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and  
28 had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning,  
and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.  
29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join  
30 thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him,  
and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Under-  
31 standest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can  
I, except some man should guide me? And he desired  
32 Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The  
place of the scripture which he read was this, *He was led  
as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before  
33 his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: in his humiliation  
his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his  
34 generation? for his life is taken from the earth.* And the  
eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom  
speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other

35 man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the  
 36 same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as  
 they went on their way, they came unto a certain water :  
 and the eunuch said, See, here is water ; what doth hinder  
 37 me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest  
 with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and  
 38 said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he  
 commanded the chariot to stand still : and they went down  
 both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch ; and he  
 39 baptized him. And when they were come up out of the  
 water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the  
 eunuch saw him no more : and he went on his way  
 40 rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus : and passing  
 through he preached in all the cities, till he came to  
 Cæsarea.

After leaving Samaria, Philip started on a new missionary tour along the coast of Palestine, from Gaza to Cæsarea, where he seems to have made his home. Only one incident in connection with this tour is recorded, viz., the conversion of the Ethiopian. This Ethiopian, who was a courtier and an official of high rank, evidently belonged to the large number of "seekers after God" who were to be found in every part of the world at this time. His quest had resulted in his becoming a Jewish proselyte. His visit to Jerusalem, however, seems only to have deepened his spiritual hunger, and hence he was eager to receive the new truth which Philip had to impart.

**26. an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip.** This is Luke's way of saying that a Divine impulse came to Philip. See ver. 29.

**unto the way that goeth.** Philip, on leaving Samaria, went south till he came to the road which connected Jerusalem and Gaza.

**Gaza.** An important town near the coast, about 60 miles S.W. of Jerusalem.

**which is desert.** It is not clear whether this phrase refers to the road or to the city. Probably the former view is correct. There was more than one road from Jerusalem to Gaza, and the phrase is added to describe the particular route which Philip was to take, viz., "the desert road." If we take the latter view, we must adopt the explanation of G. Adam Smith that there were at this time two cities of Gaza—one in ruins and the other recently rebuilt. The phrase in this case indicates the road to the ruined city.

**27. a man of Ethiopia.** Ethiopia (the present Nubia) lay to the south of Egypt, on the borders of the Sahara desert. Its capital was Meroe.

**Candace queen of the Ethiopians.** From the time of Alexander the Great, Ethiopia was ruled by queens, who bore the official title of "Candace."

**over all her treasure.** The eunuch was Treasurer, or, as we should say, Chancellor of the Exchequer, to the queen.

**28. read Esaias the prophet.** The man was evidently very much in earnest. He was reading his Bible aloud (see ver. 30), a sure sign in the case of a Jew that he was striving to understand its meaning.

**29. the Spirit said.** Note the substitution of "the Spirit" for "the angel" of ver. 26—an indication that the latter expression is not to be taken literally. An interesting parallel to this variation frequently occurs in the Old Testament, where an action is in some places attributed to the angel of Jehovah, though elsewhere it is said to be the direct work of Jehovah Himself.

**32. The place of the scripture.** Better, "The passage of scripture which he was reading was this." The quotation comes from the Septuagint version of Isa. liii. 7, 8. This is the first instance of the definite use of the great prophecy in Isa. liii. as an explanation of the sufferings of Christ. It is remarkable that the prophecy, which to-day we regard as the most significant of all, should have attracted so little attention in the early Church. Besides the present case, its use, as an explanation of the death of Christ, is confined to the First Epistle of Peter.

**33. in his humiliation.** The Septuagint rendering of the passage obscures its real meaning. The R.V. translates the Hebrew thus: "By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who among them considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living?"

**37. And Philip said.** The whole of this verse is omitted in the best MSS., and consequently in the R.V. also. It was probably added to the Text because later theologians felt that without it there seemed to be nothing to justify the baptism of the Ethiopian.

**39. the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip.** These words imply that Philip was miraculously spirited away. The same idea occurs frequently in the Old Testament (cf. 1 Kings xviii. 12; Ezek. iii. 12, viii. 3, etc.). They are not, however, to be taken literally. The fact beneath the poetry is that Philip received a Divine impulse which made him leave the Ethiopian and continue his journey.

**40. Philip was found at Azotus.** *I.e.*, Philip



was next heard of at Azotus. Azotus = Ashdod of the Old Testament; cf. 1 Sam. v. 1-7.

till he came to Cæsarea. Philip seems to have settled down in Cæsarea, where we find him twenty years later; see xxi. 8.

### Acts ix. 1-9.

#### THE CONVERSION OF SAUL OF TARSUS.

And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,  
 2 and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.  
 3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:  
 4 and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against  
 6 the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee  
 7 what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.  
 8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand,  
 9 and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

We now come to a momentous event, the results of which cannot be exaggerated—the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. Luke gives no less than three accounts of this: (1) the present passage; (2) xxii. 6-16; (3) xxvi. 12-18. The first



narrative contains Luke's own version of the event—the second and third occur in the reports of speeches made by Paul himself. These accounts are in agreement on the main facts, though there are some discrepancies between them on points of detail (see notes on ver. 7). The question whether the appearance of Christ to Saul was physical and external or spiritual and internal must be left an open one. There are two important considerations which favour the latter view. (*a*) In speaking of his conversion in Gal. i. 15, Paul seems to imply quite definitely that the appearance of Christ was internal: "But when it was the good pleasure of God . . . to reveal his Son *in me*." (*b*) Luke has a distinct tendency to externalise spiritual processes, as can be seen by comparing his account of the Baptism of Jesus with the narratives in the other Gospels. As we have seen, too, he often represents a purely spiritual impulse as the action of an angel (see viii. 26). On the other hand, we must not forget that Paul claims in the most emphatic way to have seen the Lord Jesus. "Am I not an apostle?" he writes to the Corinthians (1 Cor. ix. 1). "Have I not seen our Lord?" "Last of all, as unto one born out of due time, he appeared unto me also" (1 Cor. xv. 8). These passages make it quite clear that Paul placed the appearance of Christ to himself on the same level with His appearances to the other Apostles after the Resurrection. Unless, therefore, all the appearances of Christ are to be regarded as spiritual, it must be acknowledged that the second view does not satisfy all the facts.

1. **breathing out threatenings and slaughter.** Saul was not contented with the dis-

persion of the disciples ; with the zeal of a fanatic he determined to pursue the refugees and hunt them down. Though only the martyrdom of Stephen is recorded, the statement in xxvi. 10 implies that others were put to death as well.

**the high priest.** Probably Annas is meant, though Caiaphas was the actual High Priest. See n. on iv. 6.

**2. letters to Damascus.** Compare xxvi. 12 : " I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests." The Council claimed authority over Jews even though resident in foreign cities like Damascus ; cf. xxvi. 11.

**any of this way.** The R.V. is preferable, "any that were of the Way." "The Way" was one of the earliest titles used to describe the Christian religion. It occurs several times in this sense in Acts. See xix. 9, 23, xxii. 4, xxiv. 14, 22.

**3. a light out of heaven.** This vision is more fully described in xxvi. 13 : " At midday I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me."

**4. Saul, Saul.** In all three accounts the name "Saul" in the vision is Hebraic in form, and spelt quite differently from the Greek form of the word used by Luke in the narrative. In the vision the name is "Saoul," in the narrative "Saulos." This fact seems to warrant the deduction that Luke is here trying to reproduce with scrupulous care the account as it had been told to him.

**5, 6. it is hard . . . said unto him.** These words are omitted in the best MSS., and so do not appear in the R.V. They were added to the Text

from the two other accounts by a later editor, who was anxious to make the present narrative complete.

**go into the city.** It is clear from this statement that the travellers must have reached the confines of Damascus.

**7. the men stood speechless.** In xxvi. 14 it is stated that they all fell to the ground, but there is no real discrepancy, because xxvi. 14 describes what happened at the first appearance of the vision, while the words in the present passage describe the condition of Paul's companions at a subsequent stage.

**hearing a voice.** There is a more serious discrepancy in this statement. xxii. 9 says definitely, "they saw the light . . . but heard not the voice of him that spake to me." The usual explanation, starting from the fact that the word "voice" in the original is in the genitive case in ix. 7 and in the accusative in xxii. 9, supposes that the former means "hearing a confused noise," and the latter "they did not hear an articulate voice," and argues that the two passages are not therefore in contradiction. This explanation, however, cannot be maintained, because the same variations of case occur in the same phrase at an earlier point in the story (cf. ix. 4 followed by the accusative, xxii. 7 by the genitive), where any distinction of meaning is absolutely out of the question. But though the discrepancy cannot be resolved, it is too small a point in itself to throw any suspicion upon the narrative.

**8. saw no man.** Because the vision had blinded him; cf. xxii. 11.

## Acts ix. 10-18.

## SAUL AND ANANIAS.

- 10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias.  
11 And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called  
12 Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting  
13 his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:  
14 and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind  
15 all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of  
16 Israel: for I will shew him how great things he must  
17 suffer for my name's sake. And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy  
18 Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

Upon reaching Damascus, Saul was visited by Ananias, who is described in xxii. 12 as "a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews." Ananias gave Saul a warm welcome, restored his sight, and baptized him. The account which Paul himself gives of this event in xxii. 12-16 is simpler, and should be carefully compared with the present passage. Luke seems to be particularly

interested in the vision which came to Ananias. There can be no doubt that he has elaborated and exaggerated this part of the story. That Ananias did receive a Divine impulse to visit Paul—an impulse which at first he was inclined to resist—and that he had insight enough to understand the significance of his conversion, is quite clear. But the account of the double vision in ver. 12 and the specific details in ver. 15 are largely due to the imagination of the historian.

**10. Ananias.** We have no means of knowing how Ananias had become a Christian. He may have been converted on the day of Pentecost, or he may possibly have been one of the refugees from Jerusalem, though xxii. 12 seems to imply that he resided in Damascus.

**11. street which is called Straight.** The main street in Damascus is still called by the name "Straight."

**house of Judas.** The mention of the house of Judas illustrates Luke's love of detail, and proves that he obtained his account from one who was well informed.

**12. hath seen in a vision.** The words "in a vision" are omitted by the R.V.

**hath seen . . . a man named Ananias.** This vision within a vision, as it may be called, is far too elaborate to represent an actual spiritual fact, and the mention of the name Ananias proves that the description is coloured, at any rate, by the light of after events.

**13. he hath done to the saints at Jerusalem.** This is the first occasion upon which the title "saints" is bestowed on the members of the Christian community. The word means "those

who are set apart for the service of God," or "consecrated," and is frequently used in the Epistles of Paul. For other instances of the occurrence of the title in Acts, see ix. 32, 41, xxvi. 10. The name generally used is either "brethren" or "disciples."

**14. all that call upon thy name.** Another phrase used to describe the Christians. See also ver. 21 and xxii. 16; 1 Cor. i. 2, where, as here, it is used in close connection with the title "saints."

**15. a chosen vessel** = "a vessel specially appointed by God." For the use of the metaphor, cf. Jer. xxii. 28, li. 34; Rom. ix. 22-23.

**the Gentiles and kings, etc.** There is little doubt that the contents of the vision are expanded by Luke in the light of Paul's subsequent career.

**16. how many things he must suffer.** Paul, like his Master, was to be "a suffering servant" of God, and no small amount of the influence which he exerted on the world issued out of these sufferings. For Paul's own description of his sufferings, see 2 Cor. xi. 23-28.

**17. putting his hands on him.** See n. on vi. 6 and viii. 17. Observe that in the present instance this symbolical action is connected not only with the restoration of Saul's sight, but also with the gift of the Holy Spirit. For Paul's account of the words used by Ananias, see xxii. 14-16.

**filled with the Holy Ghost.** As we have seen, Luke always lays the utmost stress on the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The Baptism of the Spirit stands in the forefront of the career of the Apostle Paul, just as it stands in the forefront of the history of the Church.



## Acts ix. 19-25.

## THE PLOT AGAINST SAUL AT DAMASCUS.

19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened.  
 Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were  
 20 at Damascus. And straightway he preached Christ in the  
 21 synagogues, that he is the Son of God. But all that  
 heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that  
 destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem,  
 and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them  
 22 bound unto the chief priests? But Saul increased the  
 more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt  
 23 at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ. And after  
 that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill  
 24 him: but their laying await was known of Saul. And they  
 25 watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the  
 disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall  
 in a basket.

After his baptism, Saul at once began to preach at Damascus with startling effect. He was not allowed, however, to work in peace. He himself had roused his countrymen to hostility against the Christians, and he was caught in his own toils. The storm broke on his own head. A conspiracy to kill him was formed by the Jews, but he managed to escape to Jerusalem. Paul himself briefly tells the story of his flight from Damascus in 2 Cor. xi. 32: "In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king guarded the city of the Damascenes, in order to take me; but through a window was I let down in a basket by the wall, and escaped his hands." The events in this paragraph cover a period of three years.

**19. certain days.** An indefinite phrase, indicating, however, a brief period of time. Luke seems



rather hazy with regard to Saul's history immediately after his conversion. See n. on ver. 23.

**20. he preached Christ.** The better MSS. read as follows: "proclaimed Jesus that he is the Son of God." This is more in keeping with history, because "Christ" had not yet become a mere name for "Jesus."

**22. Saul increased the more in strength =** continued to grow more and more in spiritual power. Saul's stay at Damascus was a time of spiritual development. He came a raw recruit, and it needed time for him to find his bearings and readjust his religious perspective.

**proving.** The Greek word used here denotes proof by argument and inference. Saul found himself able to meet the intellectual objections which were brought against Christianity—largely, no doubt, because he himself had passed through the same phase of thought.

**23. After many days were fulfilled.** The general impression which we get from reading this paragraph is that Saul's stay in the North was only a matter of days. When we turn to the Epistle to the Galatians, however, we find that three years elapsed between Saul's conversion and his visit to Jerusalem (Gal. i. 16-18). "Many days" is an elastic phrase, which is capable (especially in its Greek form) of covering a considerable period of time, and as a matter of fact it is actually used in 1 Kings ii. 38, 39 of the exact interval which is required in the present passage, viz., three years. Some part of this time (how much it is impossible to tell) Saul spent in Arabia (see Gal. i. 17), a fact which Luke completely ignores.

24. **they watched the gates day and night.** We know from 2 Cor. xi. 32 that they had the support of the authorities, who openly abetted the plot.

25. **let him down by the wall.** Houses were built on the wall, and it was through a window in one of these that Paul was let down. Cf. Josh. ii. 15.

#### Acts ix. 26-30.

#### SAUL'S FIRST VISIT TO JERUSALEM.

26 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him,  
 27 and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at  
 28 Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them  
 29 coming in and going out at Jerusalem. And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against  
 30 the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

After escaping from Damascus, Saul visited Jerusalem for the first time after his conversion. A brief account of this visit is given in Gal. i. 18, 19, from which we gather that Saul saw none of the Apostles except Peter and James the Lord's brother. The most interesting point in this present paragraph is Luke's account of the action of Barnabas, who succeeded in quelling the natural suspicions which prevailed amongst the Christians

about Saul, and secured a welcome for him in the Church.

**26. he assayed to join himself to the disciples.** Saul had realised the true spirit of Christianity, and knew that "the communion of saints" was one of its essential principles. Hence the first thing that he did upon reaching Jerusalem was to seek out the Christian Brotherhood.

**they were all afraid of him.** The conversion of Saul—the ringleader in the persecution—seemed absolutely incredible to the Christians at Jerusalem. They had evidently heard very little about what had happened at Damascus, and were naturally suspicious about receiving the man who had been responsible for the martyrdom of Stephen.

**27. Barnabas took him.** This incident illustrates the wonderful insight possessed by Barnabas, and is quite in keeping with the description of his character which Luke gives in xi. 24.

**to the apostles.** *I.e.*, to Peter and James; for, according to Paul's own account (Gal. i. 18), these were the only Apostles he saw on this visit.

**28. he was with them going in and out.** According to Galatians, the visit to Jerusalem only lasted fifteen days (Gal. i. 18).

**29. against the Grecians.** *I.e.*, Grecian Jews, or Hellenists. See n. on vi. 1.

**30. sent him forth to Tarsus.** This is in agreement with Gal. i. 21: "Then I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia." Tarsus was Saul's native city, and he seems to have remained there till he was summoned by Barnabas to the work at Antioch (xi. 25, 26).

## Acts ix. 31-43.

## PETER'S MIRACLES AT LYDDA AND JOPPA.

31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified ; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy  
32 Ghost, were multiplied. And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the  
33 saints which dwelt at Lydda. And there he found a certain man named Æneas, which had kept his bed eight  
34 years, and was sick of the palsy. And Peter said unto him, Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole : arise, and  
35 make thy bed. And he arose immediately. And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the  
36 Lord. Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas : this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she  
37 did. And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died : whom when they had washed, they laid  
38 her in an upper chamber. And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he  
39 would not delay to come to them. Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber : and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which  
40 Dorcas made, while she was with them. But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed ; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes : and when she saw Peter, she sat up.  
41 And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her  
42 alive. And it was known throughout all Joppa ; and  
43 many believed in the Lord. And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

The narrative at this point returns to Peter, and gives a brief account of his visits to Lydda and Joppa. He is evidently following in the steps of Philip, who had made a missionary tour through the towns along the coast between Azotus and Cæsarea (viii. 40). Two incidents are recorded: (1) the cure of a paralytic named Æneas at Lydda, and (2) the restoration to life of Tabitha at Joppa. We have no further evidence in support of these miracles, but in the light of the statements of Paul, who claims in the most emphatic way to have worked miracles (cf. 2 Cor. xii. 12; Rom. xv. 18, 19), and of the Epistle to the Hebrews ii. 4, it can scarcely be doubted that miraculous cures were wrought by the Apostles.

**31. Then had the churches rest.** The best MSS. read "church," not "churches." There was as yet only one Church, the headquarters of which was at Jerusalem. All the Christians in Palestine were still regarded as members of this one Church in Jerusalem.

**all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria.** An indication of the rapid progress which Christianity had made in the country districts of Palestine through the labours of Philip and others, and a proof that a very large part of the evangelistic work of the primitive Church is unrecorded.

**32. as Peter went through all parts.** Evidently on a missionary tour, and probably with the purpose of consolidating the work of Philip, who was the pioneer of evangelistic enterprise.

**to the saints which dwelt at Lydda.** Possibly Philip's converts. Lydda (called "Lod" in 1 Chron. viii. 12), "a village not less than a city in size," as Josephus says, was situated on the

road between Jerusalem and Joppa—10 miles from the latter. **saints.** See n. on ix. 13.

**33. a certain man named Æneas.** It is uncertain whether Æneas belonged to the "saints." The use of the phrase "a certain man," instead of "a disciple" (cf. ver. 36), or "brother," seems to imply that he did not.

**34. Jesus Christ maketh thee whole.** The power of healing is always ascribed to Christ; cf. iv. 10.

**35. Saron**=Sharon. The plain of Sharon—a beautiful and fertile district—extended from Joppa to Cæsarea, a distance of 30 miles.

**36. Joppa.** The seaport of Jerusalem, 35 miles distant.

**Tabitha . . . Dorcas.** "Dorcas" is the Greek equivalent for the Aramaic "Tabitha." Both words mean "gazelle."

**37. they laid her in an upper chamber.** In the hope that Peter might be able to restore her to life.

**38. desiring him that he would not delay.** This translation fails to bring out the emphasis of the Greek. The R.V. renders, "intreating him, Delay not to come unto us."

**39. all the widows.** Probably those for whom Tabitha had worked.

**43. many days.** An indefinite expression. See n. on ix. 23.

**Simon a tanner.** The trade of a tanner was held in abomination by the Jews. That Peter should have lodged in his house shows that he was already beginning to ignore Jewish prejudices.



## Acts x. 1-xi. 18.

THE CONVERSION OF THE FIRST  
GENTILE.

## I. THE VISIONS OF CORNELIUS AND PETER (x. 1-16).

There was a certain man in Cæsarea called Cornelius, a  
2 centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout  
man, and one that feared God with all his house, which  
gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.  
3 He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the  
day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto  
4 him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was  
afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto  
him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a  
5 memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa,  
6 and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: he  
lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the  
7 sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. And  
when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed,  
he called two of his household servants, and a devout  
8 soldier of them that waited on him continually; and when  
he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to  
9 Joppa. On the morrow, as they went on their journey,  
and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the  
10 housetop to pray about the sixth hour: and he became  
very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made  
11 ready, he fell into a trance, and saw heaven opened, and  
a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a  
great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the  
12 earth: wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of  
the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls  
13 of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter;  
14 kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have  
15 never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And



the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God  
 16 hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done  
 thrice : and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

The utmost importance is attached by Luke to the conversion of Cornelius. The narrative occupies the greater part of two chapters, and the event is subsequently alluded to in xv. 7. It marks a supreme crisis in the history of the Church. Cornelius was a Gentile—a Gentile, it must be admitted, who had accepted the Jewish belief, but still a Gentile, because, though he had theoretically adopted the Jewish creed, he had never graduated as a proselyte by undergoing the rite of circumcision. His admission into the Church, therefore, meant the first recognition of the principle that it was not necessary for a man to become a Jew before he could become a Christian—or, in other words, that Christianity was no longer to be a Jewish sect but a universal religion. A step of such momentous significance was only taken under the direct impulse of God, and in the present paragraph Luke shows how the minds of both Cornelius and Peter were prepared by Divine visions for the great advance.

1. **Cornelius.** The name proves that Cornelius was a Roman.

**a centurion of the band called the Italian.** A Roman legion, which consisted nominally of 6000 men, was divided into 10 cohorts (or bands), and each cohort or band had 6 centurions—so that, when a legion was at its full strength, each centurion would have, as his name implies, 100 men under him. The “Italian band” was a cohort

composed of Italian soldiers. Critics have objected to Luke's statement on the ground that it is unlikely that a cohort of Italians would be serving so far away from home as Palestine; but Sir W. Ramsay has proved from an inscription that a Roman cohort was stationed at Carnuntum, in Syria, in 69 A.D., and that therefore there is no reason why one should not have been quartered at Cæsarea at this time.

**2. a devout man and one that feared God.**

Compare ver. 22. Cornelius belonged to the large army of semi-proselytes who were found in all parts of the world at this time. They accepted the Jewish faith, but refused to become Jews by undergoing circumcision. For other instances, cf. xiii. 16, 26, xvii. 4, 17; Luke vii. 5.

**gave much alms to the people.** The Greek word used for "the people" proves that the Jewish people are particularly referred to; cf. ver. 22.

**3. saw in a vision evidently.** For "evidently" the R.V. substitutes "openly," but "manifestly" would be a better rendering of the Greek. **the ninth hour** (see n. on iii. 1). For the introduction of **the angel**, see n. on viii. 26. We have two other versions of the vision of Cornelius: (1) x. 30-33; (2) xi. 13-15.

**5. send men to Joppa and fetch Simon.**

If this vision was a Divine impulse or inspiration, and if the introduction of the angel is simply due to the poetry of Luke, how are we to explain this knowledge of details? The key probably is to be found in the fact that Philip was at Cæsarea, and there is every likelihood that Cornelius may have come under his influence and gained the specific information from him. At any rate, in his address

(vers. 34-43), Peter assumes that Cornelius was acquainted with the main facts of the gospel message. Very possibly, it may have been because Philip did not know how to deal with the case of a Gentile like Cornelius that the whole situation arose, and so by a Divine suggestion Peter was summoned to solve the new problem that had emerged.

7. **a devout soldier.** The soldier, like his captain, had also accepted the Jewish religion.

8. **he sent them to Joppa,** which was about 30 miles from Cæsarea.

10. **fell into a trance.** The vision is supposed to have come to Peter in the form of a dream, while his own mental activity was suspended.

11. **knit at the four corners and let down.** The best MSS. simply read, "as it were a great sheet let down by four corners upon the earth," and in ver. 12 omit the words "and wild beasts."

14. **any thing that is common or unclean.** This phrase refers to food which was forbidden in the Mosaic code of law.

## THE CONVERSION OF THE FIRST GENTILE—(*continued*).

### II. THE MEETING OF PETER AND CORNELIUS (x. 17-33).

- 17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house,  
18 and stood before the gate, and called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.  
19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto

20 him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for  
 21 I have sent them. Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause where-  
 22 fore ye are come? And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to  
 23 hear words of thee. Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them,  
 24 and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. And the morrow after they entered into Cæsarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his  
 25 kinsmen and near friends. And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and  
 26 worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand  
 27 up; I myself also am a man. And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.  
 28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.  
 29 Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have  
 30 sent for me? And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright  
 31 clothing, and said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.  
 32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall  
 33 speak unto thee. Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

This section gives an account of (1) the arrival of the messengers of Cornelius at Joppa (vers. 17-20); (2) their interview with Peter (vers. 21, 22); (3) Peter's journey to Cæsarea (vers. 23, 24); (4) The meeting of Peter and Cornelius (vers. 25-29); (5) Cornelius' explanation of his vision (vers. 30-33).

17. **doubted in himself** = as in the R.V., "was much perplexed what the vision might mean." Peter's vision, unlike that of Cornelius, was vague and indefinite, and needed explanation.

19. **three men.** The soldier and two servants of Cornelius; cf. ver. 7.

23. **certain of the brethren.** According to xi. 12, six men accompanied Peter to Cæsarea, and afterwards also went with him to Jerusalem.

24. **And the morrow after.** Though the journey was only 30 miles—at the rate at which travelling was possible at this time—it could not be accomplished in a single day.

25. **worshipped him.** Cornelius had been so impressed with the vision that, Roman though he was, he greeted Peter with the most profound homage. The word "worship" does not necessarily imply the reverence due only to God; cf. Matt. xviii. 26.

28. **to keep company or come unto** = to associate with or come into the house of. The spirit of exclusiveness which characterised strict Jews almost amounted to caste. Even to enter the house of a Gentile, much more to eat with him, constituted ceremonial uncleanness (cf. xi. 3; Gal. ii. 12). This rule was very hard upon Jews who travelled in foreign countries. If they were anxious to be exact in the observance

of the Law, they had to restrict themselves to a diet of fruit and vegetables. Josephus tells us of certain priests who had been taken as prisoners to Rome, and found themselves obliged, in order not to break the Law, to live on nuts and figs. It was this exclusiveness which gave rise to the charge of "hatred to the human race" which is so often brought against the Jews of this period.

30. **a man . . . in bright apparel.** A phrase used by Luke on several occasions to describe an angel: cf. Luke xxiv. 4; Acts i. 10.

## THE CONVERSION OF THE FIRST GENTILE—(*continued*).

### III. PETER'S ADDRESS TO CORNELIUS AND HIS FRIENDS (x. 34-48).

34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I per-  
35 ceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every  
nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is  
36 accepted with him. The word which God sent unto the  
children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he  
37 is Lord of all:) that word, I say, ye know, which was  
published throughout all Judæa, and began from Galilee,  
38 after the baptism which John preached; how God  
anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with  
power: who went about doing good, and healing all that  
39 were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And  
we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the  
land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and  
40 hanged on a tree: him God raised up the third day, and  
41 shewed him openly; not to all the people, but unto  
witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat



42 and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he  
 commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify  
 that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of  
 43 quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness,  
 that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall  
 44 receive remission of sins. While Peter yet spake these  
 words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the  
 45 word. And they of the circumcision which believed were  
 astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on  
 the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy  
 46 Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and  
 47 magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid  
 water, that these should not be baptized, which have re-  
 48 ceived the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he com-  
 manded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.  
 Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Peter's address, of which Luke only gives us a bare *résumé*, assumes a knowledge of the main facts of Christianity on the part of Cornelius and his friends. This knowledge, as has already been suggested, was probably derived from Philip. Peter adds very little to what he has said in other speeches. His general line of thought is in keeping with the theological outlook of the primitive Church. The opening verse, however, marks a most important development. It not merely recognises the principle that Christianity is meant for the Gentiles, but it practically obliterates the distinction between Jew and Gentile.

35. in every nation he that feareth. This is one of the broadest enunciations of the universality of true religion found in the New Testament. It may be compared with the four great utterances of Paul on the same sub-



ject: cf. xiv. 15-18, xvii. 22-31; Rom. i. 19, 20, ii. 15, 16.

**36. The word which God sent, etc.** The statements in this and the following verses are difficult to follow, because the sentences are involved and broken. The main clause, viz., "ye know," only comes in ver. 37. The passage may be paraphrased thus: "Ye know the message which God sent unto the children of Israel, proclaiming peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all)—the message, I mean, which was published throughout all Judæa, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism of John—the message how that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth," etc.

**he is Lord of all.** The title "Lord" was one of the first to be bestowed on Jesus; in fact, the earliest Christian creed consisted of the three words, "Jesus is Lord."

**37. ye know.** According to the best Greek Text, this phrase is far more emphatic than appears in the A.V. It should be rendered "ye yourselves know." Peter is speaking to men who were already acquainted with the facts of Christianity.

**all Judæa.** "Judæa" is here used in a wide sense, and denotes the whole of Palestine.

**38. how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth.** Peter here repeats the explanation of Christ which he gave in the earlier speeches, and which is now known as the Adoptionist Theory. See n. on ii. 36.

**anointed** = made him Messiah; i.e., "the Anointed One."

**41. who did eat and drink with him.** Compare Luke xxiv. 30, 42; John xxi. 13.

**42. he commanded us to preach.** See n.

on i. 8. Compare also Luke xxiv. 47-49; Matt. xxviii. 19.

**to be the Judge of the quick and dead.** There is no specific instruction in the Gospels ordering the disciples to preach Christ as the Judge of men, but according to the Fourth Gospel Jesus made explicit claims to this prerogative; cf. John v. 22, 27.

**43. To him bear all the prophets witness,** etc. Another appeal—this time in general terms—to the witness of prophecy: cf. Luke xxiv. 44-46; Acts iii. 24.

**every one that believeth on him.** Peter's address ends in the same broad spirit in which it commenced—by an enunciation of the universality of the gospel.

**44. the Holy Ghost fell on all.** Every forward step in the Acts is characterised by a fresh Pentecost (compare viii. 17). The work amongst the Gentiles, like the work in Jerusalem and the mission to Samaria, is inaugurated by a Baptism of the Spirit.

**45. they of the circumcision.** The six Jewish Christians who had accompanied Peter from Joppa; cf. xi. 12.

**46. heard them speak with tongues.** It is quite clear that this phrase does not mean speaking in foreign languages. See notes on ii. 1-4; cf. xix. 6.

**47. Can any man forbid water?** It is significant that in the present instance the Baptism of the Spirit preceded the Baptism of water. In Samaria the process was just the reverse (viii. 15-18).

**48. commanded them to be baptized.**

Peter left the actual administration of the rite to others in the present case. Cf. also the custom of Paul (1 Cor. i. 17).

## THE CONVERSION OF THE FIRST GENTILE—(*continued*).

### IV. THE PROTEST AT JERUSALEM, AND PETER'S REPLY (xi. 1-18).

And the apostles and brethren that were in Judæa heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.  
 2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that  
 3 were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with  
 4 them. But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning,  
 5 and expounded it by order unto them, saying, I was in the city of Joppa praying : and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners ; and it came even  
 6 to me : upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the  
 7 air. And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter ;  
 8 slay and eat. But I said, Not so, Lord : for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my  
 9 mouth. But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.  
 10 And this was done three times : and all were drawn up  
 11 again into heaven. And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent  
 12 from Cæsarea unto me. And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house :

- 13 and he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house,  
 which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and  
 14 call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall tell  
 thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.  
 15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them,  
 16 as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word  
 of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with  
 water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.  
 17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he  
 did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what  
 18 was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard  
 these things, they held their peace, and glorified God,  
 saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted  
 repentance unto life.

The admission of Cornelius into the Church evoked a protest at Jerusalem. The particular point of criticism seems to have been Peter's conduct in visiting Cornelius and partaking of a meal with him (see ver. 3), though it is quite clear from ver. 18 that the larger question entered into the controversy as well. Peter defends himself by recounting the story of the Divine manifestations to himself and Cornelius, and his arguments meet with general approval.

2. **they that were of the circumcision.** *I.e.*, the Jewish Christians. Many of the Jewish converts at Jerusalem carried the narrowness and exclusiveness of Judaism over into Christianity. They were most anxious that the "new wine" should not burst the "old bottles." Hence their criticism of Peter.

3. **Ye went in to men uncircumcised.** See n. on x. 28.

4. **Peter . . . from the beginning.** The last three words are not found in the original. R.V.,

"Peter began and expounded the matter unto them."

**6. and wild beasts.** This phrase does not occur in the account of the vision given in x. 12 (R.V.). It is added for the sake of emphasis.

**11. And, behold, immediately, etc.** This verse should be translated, as in the R.V., "And behold, forthwith three men stood before the house in which we were."

**12. nothing doubting.** The word used in the true Greek Text means "making no distinction" (so R.V.).

**six brethren.** In x. 23 the number is not given. We simply read "certain of the brethren."

**13. had seen an angel** (R.V., "the angel"). See x. 3.

**15. the Holy Ghost fell on them.** See n. on x. 44. The significant words, "as on us at the beginning," prove that Pentecost was not an isolated event in the history of the Church.

**16. John indeed baptized, etc.** See n. on i. 5.

**17. who believed.** These words belong to "them" as well as to "us." Faith both in the case of the first believers at Jerusalem and the Gentile friends of Cornelius is the condition precedent for the bestowal of the Spirit.

**18. they held their peace.** In the light of later history we know that the peace was only temporary. The question was not permanently settled. We learn from Acts xv. and Paul's Epistle to the Galatians that a long struggle had still to be waged before the universality of the gospel became generally accepted by the Jewish element in the Church.

## Acts xi. 19-26.

## THE PROBLEM OF ANTIOCH.

19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but  
 20 unto the Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord  
 21 Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas,  
 23 that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave  
 24 unto the Lord. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added  
 25 unto the Lord. Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: and when he had found him, he brought him  
 26 unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

Some of the refugees from Jerusalem carried the gospel to Antioch. The success of their work raised a problem which caused no little anxiety to the Church at Jerusalem. There is some doubt as to the exact character of the problem, because at a crucial point in the narrative (ver. 20) the reading of the Greek Text is uncertain. The variation is clear if we compare the A.V. and the R.V. The A.V. reads, "spake unto the Grecians," *i.e.*, to the Grecian Jews or Hellenists (see n. on



vi. 1). The R.V. reads, "spake unto the Greeks also." If we adopt the latter translation, it is clear that the misgiving at Jerusalem was due to the fact that these unknown refugees were initiating on their own responsibility a mission to the Gentiles. It was all very well to admit an isolated Gentile like Cornelius, but was the Church prepared to undertake a definite mission to the Gentiles? If we follow the A.V., on the other hand (and many scholars think that in the present case the A.V. is more correct), the problem was quite different. There was no question of a Gentile mission. The point was whether the unauthorised mission of the refugees at Antioch was to be recognised by the Church at Jerusalem. They had not been appointed or commissioned to undertake the work. They had acted altogether on their own initiative. It was quite an innovation to go beyond the borders of Palestine. Was it open to anyone—without appointment and without even the consent of the Jerusalem Church—to preach anywhere?

Whichever form the problem actually assumed (and it is a matter upon which a certain decision cannot be reached), the Church at Jerusalem, after discussion, commissioned Barnabas to go to Antioch and investigate the matter on the spot. The conclusion which he reached as a result of his visit was altogether favourable to the work at Antioch (see vers. 23, 24), and he was the means of inducing Saul to leave Cilicia and join him in the task of developing the operations which had been so successfully started in the town.

19. they which were scattered abroad.



The persecution which resulted in the martyrdom of Stephen turned out to be a blessing in disguise to the Church, because it led to its expansion (see n. on viii. 1). The names of these missionaries are unknown, but amongst them may have been the prophets and teachers mentioned in xiii. 1.

**Phœnice** (R.V., "Phœnicia"). A strip of country on the northern coast of Palestine, which contained the important towns of Tyre and Sidon (see xv. 3, xxi. 2). We find disciples at Tyre (xxi. 4), who were possibly the result of this mission.

**Cyprus.** The island from which Barnabas had originally come (iv. 36), and which was the scene of Paul's earliest missionary work (xiii. 4-12). Perhaps Mnason, who is described in xxi. 16 as a native of Cyprus and an early disciple (though he subsequently lived at Jerusalem), may have owed his conversion to this mission.

**Antioch**, the capital of the province of Syria, was situated on the river Orontes, about 15 miles from the sea. According to Josephus, it was the third city of the Roman Empire, and therefore next in importance to Rome and Alexandria. It has been described as "the Queen of the East," owing to its wealth and luxury. Its magnificent temple of Daphne was one of the great centres of pagan idolatry in the ancient world. The significance of the mission to Antioch therefore cannot be exaggerated. For the first time Christianity entered into the main stream of the world's life. Henceforth it is Antioch, and not Jerusalem, that constitutes the mainspring of Christian enterprise.

20. **Cyrene.** See ii. 10. The name of Lucius of Cyrene is mentioned in xiii. 1, and he was probably one of the men alluded to here.

**unto the Grecians** (R.V., "Greeks"). The importance of the distinction between these two translations has already been pointed out in the introductory paragraph to this section. If we adopt the R.V. rendering, these men were the first missionaries to the heathen. The context certainly seems to be in favour of this interpretation. There is a sharp contrast drawn between "Jews" and "Greeks"—a contrast which loses much of its force if we substitute Hellenists (*i.e.* Grecian Jews) for Greeks. On the other hand, the latter reading has strong support in the MSS.

22. **they sent forth Barnabas.** The Church at Jerusalem was evidently very much disconcerted by the news from Antioch. A Church meeting was held, and as a result (probably as a compromise between the two sections of the Church) it was decided to send Barnabas as a commissioner to investigate the work. For Barnabas' qualifications, see notes on iv. 36, 37, and for his insight into character, see n. on ix. 27. His connection with Cyprus, and possibly therefore with "the men of Cyprus" who were responsible for the work at Antioch, was an additional reason for the appointment.

23. **had seen the grace of God.** *I.e.*, the manifestation of the grace of God in the success of the mission and the conversion of the Antiochenes.

**cleave unto the Lord.** Barnabas imposes no conditions or regulations upon the Church at Antioch. He simply urges the missionaries and

the converts alike to persist in their purpose and remain steadfast.

**24. he was a good man, etc.** Similar praise is bestowed on Stephen in vi. 5. Luke seems to recognise how much depended on Barnabas' decision. The future of missionary work was hanging in the balance. Barnabas' wise judgment is attributed to the fact that he was animated by the same Spirit who had inspired the missionaries to take up the work at Antioch.

**25. Then departed Barnabas.** This is the second occasion upon which Barnabas exhibits remarkable insight as to the possibilities which lay before Saul of Tarsus; see n. on ix. 27.

**26. for a whole year.** The work of Barnabas and Saul was only interrupted when the compelling power of the Spirit sent these two men on a wider mission (xiii. 1-3).

**the disciples were called Christians.** Antioch has been described as "a city of nick-names," and it was doubtless as a nickname that the title "Christian" was first of all bestowed—in fact, it seems to have been regarded as a nickname for some time afterwards, for Tacitus, in describing the Neronic persecution in 64, speaks of those "whom the populace used to call Christians."† The word "Christian" means "belonging to Christ," "a follower of Christ." It was not till the close of the first century that it came into general use. There are only two other instances of its use in the New Testament, viz., xxvi. 28 and 1 Pet. iv. 16. The names most often employed are "disciples," "brethren," and "saints."

## Acts xi. 27-30.

## ANTIOCH'S GIFT TO JERUSALEM.

27 And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto  
28 Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus,  
and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth  
throughout all the world : which came to pass in the days  
29 of Claudius Cæsar. Then the disciples, every man accord-  
ing to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren  
30 which dwelt in Judæa : which also they did, and sent it  
to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

This little paragraph records an act of liberality on the part of the new community at Antioch towards the Church at Jerusalem. Jerusalem, for reasons already given in a note on iv. 34, contained an abnormal amount of poverty, and in times of famine the distress amongst the poorer classes was very great. Antioch set the precedent, which was afterwards followed by many other churches, of sending relief "to the poor saints" at Jerusalem.

27. **prophets.** The prophets of the New Testament represent a distinct order of the ministry. This is clear from Paul's statement in 1 Cor. xii. 28 : "God hath set in the church, firstly apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers." These prophets were primarily preachers, but some of them, as in the present case, were endowed with special gifts of insight which enabled them to foretell the future. They are mentioned again in xiii. 1, xv. 32, xxi. 9, 10, and there are frequent allusions to them in the Epistles : cf. Rom. xii. 6 ; 1 Cor. xii. 10, 28, 29, xiii. 2, 8, xiv. 29-37. The names of some of these prophets at Antioch are given in xiii. 1.

28. **And there stood up.** Some MSS. preserve a very interesting addition at the commencement of this verse: "And there was much exultant joy. And when we were assembled together one from among them spake," etc. If this reading is right, we have here the first of the "We-passages," or personal narratives, which form such an interesting feature in the second part of Acts. The evidence, however, is not sufficiently strong to warrant a confident assertion in the present case.

**Agabus** is mentioned again in xxi. 10, 11, where he is represented as prophesying the arrest of Paul in Jerusalem.

**great dearth** (R.V., "famine"). There are no records of a world-wide famine, though there are accounts of many local famines in the reign of Claudius. This statement must either be due to prophetic exaggeration or be explained by the fact that even a local famine produced effects which were world-wide in the range of their influence.

**in the day of Claudius** (the term "Cæsar" is omitted in the R.V.). The Emperor Claudius succeeded Caligula, and reigned from 41 to 54 A.D. There were several severe famines in his time. The one alluded to here is probably the great famine in Judæa, which according to Josephus culminated in the year 45 or 46, and which was so severe that Queen Helena of Adiabene, who was staying at Jerusalem, procured a cargo of corn from Alexandria and a cargo of figs from Cyprus for the relief of the destitute people in Jerusalem.

29. **the disciples.** *I.e.*, the Christians at Antioch. Luke still uses the old names in describing them. Cf. also "the brethren that dwelt in Judæa."

**30. the elders.** This is the first reference to "elders" in Acts. Some think that this is the title which was bestowed on "the Seven" (cf. vi. 3). It is probable, however, that the two offices were distinct, and that the office of elder was borrowed from the organisation of the Jewish synagogue, which was always controlled by a body of elders. For subsequent references in Acts, see xiv. 23, xx. 17, 28, xxi. 18.

**by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.** This implies a second visit of Saul to Jerusalem (see also xii. 25), and raises a serious difficulty when the narrative of Acts is compared with the statements of Paul in Gal. i. and ii. In Galatians Paul insists that within a given period he only visited Jerusalem twice. The first occasion is generally identified with the visit in Acts ix. 26, the second with the visit described in chap. xv. The statement in the present passage, therefore, seems definitely excluded by Paul's argument. Several suggestions have been made for removing the difficulty. (1) It is argued that Paul did not actually enter Jerusalem on the present occasion, but only met the elders some distance outside the city. This explanation, however, seems to be in conflict with the express statement in xii. 25. (2) Other scholars think that the visit described here is to be identified with that narrated in chap. xv., the intervening chapters being placed in a wrong chronological order. There is a good deal to be said for this view. (3) Others think that the present visit is to be identified with the second of Galatians, or that both visits in Galatians fall at an earlier point than this, there being no mention at all in Acts of the second. The great objection to this view, especially in its latter



form, is that it necessitates giving an extremely early date to the Epistle to the Galatians.

### Acts xii.

#### THE PERSECUTION UNDER HEROD AGRIPPA.

##### I. PETER'S MARVELLOUS ESCAPE FROM PRISON (xii. 1-11).

Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his  
2 hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James  
3 the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw  
it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also.  
4 (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) And when he  
had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered  
him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him ; intending  
5 after Easter to bring him forth to the people. Peter there-  
fore was kept in prison : but prayer was made without  
6 ceasing of the church unto God for him. And when Herod  
would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was  
sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains :  
7 and the keepers before the door kept the prison. And,  
behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light  
shined in the prison : and he smote Peter on the side, and  
raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains  
8 fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him,  
Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did.  
And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and  
9 follow me. And he went out, and followed him ; and wist  
not that it was true which was done by the angel ; but  
10 thought he saw a vision. When they were past the first  
and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that  
leadeth unto the city ; which opened to them of his own  
accord : and they went out, and passed on through one

11 street ; and forthwith the angel departed from him. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

The narrative now follows Saul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, and gives an account of a severe persecution which was assailing the Church at the time of their visit. This persecution, unlike the spasmodic outbreaks recorded in the earlier chapters of Acts which came from the Sadducees and priests, was a systematic attack organised by King Herod Agrippa. The appearance of Herod Agrippa upon the scene is a new factor in the situation. There had been no king at Jerusalem since the death of Archelaus in 6 A.D. Between that date and 41 A.D. the province of Judæa was governed entirely by the Roman Procurator—though, of course, other districts of Palestine had their kings; *e.g.*, Herod Antipas, and Philip. In 41, however, the whole of Palestine, for the first time since the death of Herod the Great in 4 B.C., was united under a single sovereign—Herod Agrippa I.—who made Jerusalem the centre of his government. Agrippa was naturally anxious to win popular favour with his Jewish subjects, and it was for this reason that he made an attempt to stamp out Christianity at Jerusalem. Luke only records two incidents in connection with the persecution: (1) the murder of James the son of Zebedee; (2) the imprisonment of Peter. His main interest is in the story of Peter's miraculous escape from prison, which he attributes to the intervention of an angel. When we remember, however, Luke's habit of introducing angels into his narrative (see n. on viii. 26), we

shall perhaps feel ourselves justified in regarding this part of the story as an embellishment, though we have no reason for questioning the fact that in some way or other Peter did escape from prison, and so was saved from the fate which befell James.

1. **about that time.** *I.e.*, about the time when Saul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem with the gift from the Church at Antioch. As Herod Agrippa died in 44 A.D. and the persecution occurred shortly before his death, we may safely suppose that the phrase refers to a date almost immediately preceding the Passover of that year.

**Herod the king.** Herod Agrippa 1., who became king of the whole of Palestine in 41, and reigned for three years. The most marked feature of his reign is the devotion which he showed towards the Jewish religion. As Josephus says: "He loved to live continually at Jerusalem, and was extremely exact in the observance of the laws of his country. He therefore kept himself entirely pure, nor did any day pass over his head without its appointed sacrifice."

2. **he killed James the brother of John.** James the brother of John must be distinguished from James the brother of the Lord, who was the leader of the Church at Jerusalem (cf. ver. 17 and xv. 13). Little is known about the James mentioned here, except that he was one of the inner circle of Christ's disciples.

3. **it pleased the Jews.** The main point in Agrippa's policy was to win the favour of the Jews. Josephus draws a contrast between him and his grandfather, Herod the Great, in this respect. Herod the Great was "more friendly to the Greeks

than to the Jews," but Agrippa "was not at all like him in this matter."

**the days of unleavened bread.** The Passover was followed by a period of seven days during which only unleavened bread was eaten. During the Passover week no executions were allowed, and it was for this reason that Peter was kept in prison.

**4. four quaternions.** A quaternion is a group of four men. The four groups divided the watch between them, so that Peter was always guarded by four soldiers. Two of these had their wrists chained to Peter's wrists, and the other two (the first and second ward) kept watch at the door.

**after Easter.** R.V., "after the Passover," which is the literal translation of the Greek. The word "Easter" is used in the A.V. to show that the reference is not merely to the Passover day, but to the whole of the Passover week. Peter was arrested just before the feast began, and so it was necessary to keep him in prison for seven days before the execution was possible.

**6. bound with two chains.** The word for "chains" is a technical expression in the Greek for the "wristbands" by which Peter was bound to the two soldiers (see ver. 4).

**keepers before the door.** Two of the quaternion of soldiers who kept guard at the door.

**10. the iron gate that leadeth into the city.** The details given in this and the following verse bear the mark of reality stamped on them, and seem to show that Luke obtained his knowledge of this incident from a specially well-informed source.

**THE PERSECUTION UNDER HEROD  
AGRIPPA—(continued).**

**II. THE FLIGHT OF PETER (xii. 12-19).**

12 And when he had considered the thing, he came to the  
house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was  
13 Mark ; where many were gathered together praying. And  
as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to  
14 hearken, named Rhoda. And when she knew Peter's  
voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in,  
15 and told how Peter stood before the gate. And they said  
unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that  
16 it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel. But  
Peter continued knocking : and when they had opened the  
17 door, and saw him, they were astonished. But he,  
beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace,  
declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of  
the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto  
James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went  
18 into another place. Now as soon as it was day, there was  
no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of  
19 Peter. And when Herod had sought for him, and found  
him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that  
they should be put to death. And he went down from  
Judæa to Cæsarea, and there abode.

After escaping from prison, Peter pays a visit to a group of disciples who are assembled for prayer at the house of Mary the mother of John Mark—a house which seems to have been a regular rendezvous for Christian gatherings, and then, after recounting the story of his deliverance, seeks safety in flight. The scene, as described by Luke, affords us a glimpse into the home-life of the primitive

Church, and enables us to form some conception as to the character of its meetings.

**12. when he had considered the thing.** *I.e.*, after deliberating as to the best course to adopt.

**the house of Mary.** Mary was probably a widow. She seems to have been one of the leading members of the Church at Jerusalem. In all likelihood she was closely related to Barnabas, since in Col. iv. 10 her son John Mark is described as his cousin (or nephew).

**13. came to hearken.** R.V., "to answer,"—a better translation of the Greek.

**15. It is his angel.** The belief that everyone possessed a guardian angel was very common amongst the Jews at this time: cf. Matt. xviii. 10; Heb. i. 14.

**17. to hold their peace.** There was no time to waste. If the soldiers awoke, Peter might be followed, and the house of Mary was well known to the authorities as a resort of the Christians.

**to James.** James the brother of the Lord—the president of the Church at Jerusalem. See n. on xii. 2.

**to another place.** Probably outside the city—some secret place of hiding where the authorities would not be able to find him.

## THE PERSECUTION UNDER HEROD AGRIPPA—(*continued*).

### III. THE TRAGIC DEATH OF AGRIPPA (xii. 20-24).

20 And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and,



having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace ; because their country was nourished by the  
 21 king's country. And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration  
 22 unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is  
 23 the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory : and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the  
 24 ghost. But the word of God grew and multiplied.

The persecution, which threatened to destroy the Church, was soon brought to an end owing to the sudden death of Herod Agrippa at Cæsarea. In addition to the narrative of Luke, we have a full account of Agrippa's fate in Josephus. The essential part of Josephus' description is as follows : "Now when Agrippa had reigned three years, he came to Cæsarea, and there he exhibited shows in honour of Cæsar. At which festival a great multitude was gotten together of the principal persons and such as were of dignity through his province. On the second day of the festival he put on a garment made wholly of silver and of a contexture truly wonderful, and came into the theatre early in the morning : the silver of his garment, illuminated by the reflection of the sun's rays, shone out in a surprising manner, and was so resplendent that it created a feeling of awe and dread in the minds of the onlookers, and presently his flatterers cried out that he was a god, and added, 'Be thou merciful unto us, for although we have hitherto revered thee only as a man, we shall henceforth recognise thee as superior to mortal nature.' Upon this the king did neither rebuke them nor reject their impious flattery. But as he looked up presently he saw an owl sitting upon a rope, and perceived

at once that this bird was the messenger of ill tidings, and fell into sorrow. A severe pain arose also in his belly of a most violent character. Looking upon his friends, he said, 'I whom you call a god am commanded to depart from this life. Providence thus reproves the lying words which you have just uttered to me.' When he had said this, his pain became violent, and he was carried into the palace. . . . And when he had been quite worn out by the pain in his belly for five days, he departed this life, being in the fifty-fourth year of his age."<sup>1</sup> It will be observed that Luke and Josephus are in essential agreement, though the resemblances are not sufficiently minute to warrant the conclusion that the former borrowed his account from the latter. The main differences between the two accounts are (1) Josephus says nothing about the occasion of the visit to Cæsarea; (2) Luke gives the impression that Agrippa's death happened immediately; Josephus, on the other hand, states that an interval of five days elapsed.

**20. Tyre and Sidon** were important ports in Phœnicia. We have no evidence as to the character of the dispute between these cities and Agrippa.

**Blastus the king's chamberlain.** The name seems to imply that Blastus was a Roman. His designation shows that he was a court official in charge of the king's sleeping apartments.

**desired peace.** This phrase does not imply that a state of war existed. They were anxious simply that the dispute should be ended.

**nourished by the king's country.** Tyre and Sidon depended upon Palestine for (1) their supply

<sup>1</sup> This description has been abbreviated somewhat in places by the omission of non-essential phrases.

of food, (2) their commerce. Agrippa had probably penalised these cities by diverting commerce to other ports and stopping the food supply.

21. **in royal apparel.** The garment of silver mentioned by Josephus.

23. **eaten of worms.** This is not inconsistent with the account in Josephus. The same fate befell Antiochus (2 Macc. ix. 5) and Herod the Great (Josephus, *Antiquities*, xvii. 6. 5).

### Acts xii. 25-xiii. 3.

#### THE ORDINATION OF SAUL AND BARNABAS FOR MISSIONARY WORK.

25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John,  
1 whose surname was Mark. Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with  
2 Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me  
Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called  
3 them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

This short but momentous paragraph takes us back again with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch. It follows immediately upon xi. 30, the account of Agrippa's persecution being a digression. It relates how, through the inspiration of the Spirit, the Church at Antioch was led to consecrate Saul and Barnabas for wider missionary work, and so it forms an introduction to the third part of Acts,

which describes the carrying of the gospel to "the ends of the earth" (see i. 8).

**25. returned from Jerusalem.** The best MSS. read "returned to Jerusalem," but it seems clear that the sense of the passage (which follows on xi. 30) requires "from Jerusalem,"—unless, indeed, we take the phrase with the next clause, "when they had fulfilled their ministry at Jerusalem."

**John Mark.** The son of Mary (xii. 12) and cousin of Barnabas (Col. iv. 10). He accompanied Saul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey (xiii. 5), but left them after they departed from Cyprus (xiii. 13), and returned to Jerusalem. Owing to his desertion, Paul refused to take him on the second missionary tour (xv. 37-39).

**xiii. 1. prophets and teachers.** See n. on xi. 27. Nothing is known about Niger or Lucius. They may possibly have been the original founders of the Church at Antioch (see xi. 20).

**Manaen which had been,** etc. R.V., "Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch." The Greek word simply indicates that Manaen had been brought up at the court with Herod Antipas. Josephus tells us of a certain Manaen who had won the favour of Herod the Great, and became a member of his court. The Manaen of Antioch may have been his son or grandson, and this would explain why he should have been selected as the playmate and companion of Herod Antipas. We know of at least one lady connected with Herod's court who became a Christian, viz., Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and it may have been through her influence that Manaen was converted.

**Herod the tetrarch** = Herod Antipas, who is so

often mentioned in the Gospels. When Herod the Great died in 4 B.C., his kingdom was divided into four divisions or tetrarchies, and Herod Antipas was made tetrarch (= ruler of a fourth part) of Galilee and Samaria.

**2. the Holy Ghost said.** Once again Luke lays emphasis on the agency of the Spirit (see n. on viii. 17, x. 44). The greatest step that had been taken by the Church is ascribed directly to the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

**Separate me Barnabas and Saul.** Saul and Barnabas had been in Antioch for a year (xi. 26). The claims of the city were very great, but there were even higher claims upon them than the needs of Antioch—the claims of the pagan world. It was a tremendous sacrifice for the Church of Antioch to let them go, but the sacrifice was amply justified by the results of the mission.

**3. they laid hands on them.** This was done in token of the fact that the Church dedicated them to missionary work. The rite conferred no gift or grace (see n. on vi. 6). Some ancient MSS., to which Sir W. Ramsay attaches great importance, read here “they *all* laid hands on them,” indicating that the dedication was the act of the whole Church, and not merely of the prophets.

#### Acts xiii. 4-12.

#### THE MISSION TO CYPRUS.

4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of

God in the synagogues of the Jews : and they had also  
 6 John to their minister. And when they had gone through  
 the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false  
 7 prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus : which was  
 with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent  
 man ; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to  
 8 hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer, (for so  
 is his name by interpretation,) withstood them, seeking to  
 9 turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul, (who  
 also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his  
 10 eyes on him, and said, O full of all subtilty and all  
 mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all right-  
 ousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of  
 11 the Lord ? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is  
 upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for  
 a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and  
 a darkness ; and he went about seeking some to lead  
 12 him by the hand. Then the deputy, when he saw what  
 was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of  
 the Lord.

There were at least three reasons why Cyprus was chosen as the first field for missionary work : (1) some efforts on a small scale had already been commenced there by refugees from Jerusalem (xi. 19) ; (2) Barnabas was a native of Cyprus (iv. 36) ; (3) some of the founders of the Church at Antioch had come from Cyprus (xi. 20). Luke confines his narrative to two incidents : (*a*) the conversion of the governor of the island, Sergius Paulus ; (*b*) the silencing of Elymas the sorcerer.

4. **Seleucia.** The port of Antioch, a town of considerable commercial importance.

5. **Salamis.** An important seaport town situated on the eastern coast of the island.

in the synagogues of the Jews. There were



large numbers of Jews, as we know from Josephus, living at Salamis, which was an excellent commercial centre, and famed for its copper-mines. Hence the use of the plural "synagogues." One synagogue was not sufficient for the Jewish population. Note the fact that Paul attempts from the very first to use the Jewish synagogue as his base of operation; see ver. 14, xiv. 1, xvii. 2, xviii. 4, etc.

**John as their minister.** See n. on xii. 25. The R.V. translates "attendant," indicating that John played a relatively humble part on the tour, possibly baptizing and instructing the converts.

**6. when they had gone through.** The Greek word means something more than mere travel. To bring out its force we must translate, "When they had made a missionary tour through the island."

**Paphos.** The capital of Cyprus and the seat of the Roman governor, situated on the S.W. of the island.

**a certain sorcerer.** The Christian Faith constantly came into conflict with magicians—a class of men who imposed on the credulity of ignorant people by displays of magic in the name of religion; compare Simon Magus (viii. 9) and the Jewish exorcists at Ephesus (xix. 13).

**Bar-jesus.** The name means "son of Jesus" or "son of a saviour." He also bore the name of Elymas (see ver. 8).

**7. which was with the deputy** (R.V., "pro-consul"). Roman provinces were divided into two classes: (1) imperial, under the direct control of the Emperor; (2) senatorial, under the control of the Senate. In the former case the governor always

bore the title of "Legate," in the latter that of "Proconsul." We have here, therefore, an instance of Luke's accuracy in calling Sergius Paulus by his proper designation. A further piece of confirmatory evidence in support of the accuracy of this particular narrative is to be found in an inscription discovered in Cyprus which contains the words, "IN THE TIME OF THE PROCONSUL PAULUS,"—an evident allusion to the Sergius Paulus mentioned here.

**a prudent man.** R.V., "a man of understanding." A fair-minded man, anxious to hear all who had any qualification to speak.

8. **Elymas.** There is a difficulty about this word. Luke seems to imply that "Elymas" is an equivalent for "Bar-jesus." This, however, unless the form of the words has been corrupted in the transmission of the Text, can scarcely be the case. "Elymas," however, may come from an Arabic root meaning "wise," and so be the equivalent of "magus" or "sorcerer," and perhaps this is what Luke actually meant.

9. **Saul who is called Paul.** There is nothing to show that the name "Paul" had only recently been assumed. Like many other people, the Apostle probably possessed both names long before this event. "Saul" was a Jewish name, and was used by him in his relations with Jews. "Paul," on the other hand, was a Gentile term, and employed in his intercourse with Gentiles. It was appropriate—now that he had become an Apostle to the Gentiles—that henceforth he should be called Paul.

10. **thou child of the devil.** In contrast to Bar-jesus. Elymas had belied his own name, and become a "child of the devil."

**enemy of righteousness.** Elymas, instead of proclaiming the righteousness revealed in the Law, as he might have done if he had been a true teacher, had become a charlatan, a mere trickster, deceiving men by his cunning arts.

**12. being astonished at the doctrine (R.V., "teaching") of the Lord.** The Proconsul's conversion was not due to the overthrow of Elymas, but rather to his own appreciation of the teaching of Jesus, as unfolded by Paul and Barnabas.

#### Acts xiii. 13-41.

#### PAUL'S MISSIONARY SERMON AT ANTIOCH.

- 13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing  
 14 from them returned to Jerusalem. But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.  
 15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people,  
 16 say on. Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give  
 17 audience. The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm  
 18 brought he them out of it. And about the time of forty  
 19 years suffered he their manners in the wilderness. And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of  
 20 Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot. And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four  
 21 hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them

Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the  
22 space of forty years. And when he had removed him, he  
raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom  
also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the  
son of Jesse a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil  
23 all my will. Of this man's seed hath God according to  
24 his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: when  
John had first preached before his coming the baptism of  
25 repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I  
am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose  
26 shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose. Men and  
brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whoso-  
ever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this  
27 salvation sent. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and  
their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices  
of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they  
28 have fulfilled them in condemning him. And though they  
found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate  
29 that he should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all  
that was written of him, they took him down from the  
30 tree, and laid him in a sepulchre. But God raised him  
31 from the dead: and he was seen many days of them  
which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who  
32 are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto  
you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made  
33 unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us  
their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it  
is also written in the second psalm, *Thou art my Son, this*  
34 *day have I begotten thee.* And as concerning that he  
raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to  
corruption, he said on this wise, *I will give you the sure*  
35 *mercies of David.* Wherefore he saith also in another  
psalm, *Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see*  
36 *corruption.* For David, after he had served his own  
generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid  
37 unto his fathers, and saw corruption: but he, whom God

38 raised again, saw no corruption. Be it known unto you  
 therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is  
 39 preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him  
 all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye  
 40 could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware there-  
 fore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the  
 41 prophets; *Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish:*  
*for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall*  
*in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.*

After leaving Cyprus, the two missionaries crossed over to the south of Asia Minor. Starting from Perga, they made a tour through Pamphylia, and then worked their way northwards into South Galatia. In this section Luke gives an account of their labours in Antioch, the capital of Pisidia. The bulk of the narrative is devoted to a sermon preached by Paul, which is probably given as a specimen of his missionary addresses. Only two other specimens are given in Acts, and they are quite of a different type, viz., (1) the short address at Lystra (xiv. 15-18); (2) the speech at Athens (xvii. 22-31). The sermon at Antioch was addressed to Jews, the two other speeches to the Gentiles. We may regard the present sermon, therefore, as a typical illustration of Paul's method of presenting the gospel to his own countrymen. The sermon has many points of affinity with the speeches of Peter and Stephen, especially in the following points: (1) the appeal to history; (2) the appeal to prophecy, particularly to the Davidic ideal; (3) the insistence on the fact of the Resurrection of Christ; (4) the similarity of its theological outlook, particularly in the absence from it of any allusion to a doctrine of atonement. The sermon may be divided into three parts: (a) in the

first part Paul sets himself to prove that Jesus represents the culmination of Israel's history and the fulfilment of the prophetic ideal (vers. 17-25); (b) in the second, Paul explains the reason for the death of Christ, and insists on the fact of the Resurrection (vers. 26-37); (c) in the third he asserts that Jesus is the instrument of the Divine forgiveness, and appeals to his hearers to repent.

**13. Paul and his company.** A significant phrase, indicating that Paul had now become the central figure.

**Perga.** The capital of Pamphylia, about 12 miles N.E. of Attalia, the port at which the missionaries must have landed.

**John departed.** No reason is given, but we gather from xv. 38 that Paul considered his conduct blameworthy. The probability is that he was unwilling to face the dangers of the journey across Mount Taurus into South Galatia.

**14. they came to Antioch in Pisidia.** This Antioch must be distinguished from the Syrian Antioch of xiii. 1. The district of Pisidia was situated between Pamphylia and Phrygia. Its greatest length from E. to W. was 120 miles, and its breadth about 50. At this time it was part of the Roman province of Galatia. If we adopt the view that the Epistle to the Galatians was written to the four cities of South Galatia, we know from Gal. iv. 13 that Paul was ill when he reached Antioch. Sir W. Ramsay suggests that his travel in the low-lying districts of Pamphylia had induced an attack of malarial fever, and that it was a desire to get rid of the malaria that led him to visit the mountainous district in which Antioch was situated.



**15. after reading the law and the prophets.** This verse gives us an excellent description of a synagogue service (compare Luke iv. 16–20).

**17. ye that fear God.** See n. on x. 2. The synagogue service was attended not only by Jews, but by others who, like Cornelius, accepted the Jewish creed, though they refused to undergo circumcision.

**18. suffered he their manners.** Some Greek Texts read, “bare them as a nursing father,” as in Deut. i. 31. This seems to give the best sense, and it only needs the change of a single letter in the Greek verb, which has the support of the best MSS.

**19. destroyed seven nations.** For the names of the nations see Deut. vii. 1.

**20. for the space of four hundred and fifty years.** This clause ought to be connected with the previous sentence, as in the R.V.: “he gave them their land for an inheritance for about four hundred and fifty years, and after these things he gave them judges.”

**22. a man after mine own heart, etc.** This quotation combines two passages: Ps. lxxxix. 20; 1 Sam. xiii. 14.

**27.** In this verse Paul gives the same twofold explanation of the death of Christ which had already been given by Peter: (1) it was due to the ignorance of the rulers (see iii. 17); (2) it was in accordance with prophecy (see iii. 18).

**29. they . . . laid him in a sepulchre.** The burial of Jesus is here inaccurately ascribed to “the rulers.” For the true account see Luke xxiii. 50–56. It is impossible to say whether the error is due to a slip of Luke’s pen, or whether he is reproducing a mistake made by Paul in ignorance.

31. **for many days.** See n. on i. 3.

**them that came up from Galilee.** All the twelve disciples, except Judas, were Galileans (see i. 11).

**witnesses unto the people.** See n. on i. 8.

33. **raised up Jesus again** (R.V. omits "again"). *I.e.*, from the dead. To Paul it was the Resurrection which proved Christ to be Divine; cf. Rom. i. 3-5.

**Thou art my Son,** etc. A quotation from Ps. ii. 7. "This day" must refer, as the context shows, to the day of Resurrection. If this be so, the passage must mean, if we are to take it as it stands, that it was on the day of Resurrection that Jesus was begotten and became the Son of God. If this be the true interpretation, Paul's statement is exactly in line with the Adoptionist view of Christ which appears in the speeches of Peter. See n. on ii. 36 and x. 38.

34. The connection of thought is not quite easy to follow here. Paul has just stated that the Resurrection proved the Divine sonship of Christ. But the question might still be asked, Is this sonship eternal? or has Christ only been raised up for a time? What guarantee is there that the Christ will remain the Son of God for ever? Paul replies to this question as follows:—The doubt may be at once removed by an appeal to prophecy. Jesus inherits "the sure mercies of David"; among these mercies is the promise of Psalm xvi. that God's Holy One will not suffer corruption—a promise which must apply to Christ, as it was not realised by David.

**now no more to return to corruption.** This is the emphatic clause and the main point of the argument.

**the sure mercies of David.** R.V., "the holy and sure blessings of David." A quotation from Isa. lv. 3.

35. This quotation comes from Ps. xvi. 10. (See n. on ii. 25.) The argument of this and the two following verses is a repetition of what is found in Peter's speech at Pentecost (compare ii. 29-31).

38. **through this man . . . forgiveness of sins.** Compare v. 31. Note that the forgiveness of sin is not connected with the death of Christ.

39. **all that believe are justified.** This verse has a distinctly Pauline ring about it. It contains the essential truth of Pauline theology, viz., the doctrine of justification by faith. It is this verse that really differentiates the speech from the addresses of Peter and Stephen.

**ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.** A phrase which recalls the account of Paul's own tragic spiritual struggle given in Rom. vii. 7-25.

41. The quotation is taken from Hab. i. 5.

#### Acts xiii. 42-52.

### THE EFFECT OF PAUL'S SERMON AT ANTIOCH.

- 42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the  
Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to  
43 them the next Sabbath. Now when the congregation was  
broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes  
followed Paul and Barnabas : who, speaking to them, per-  
44 suaded them to continue in the grace of God. And the  
next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to

45 hear the word of God. But when the Jews saw the multi-  
tudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those  
things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blas-  
46 pheming. Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It  
was necessary that the word of God should first have been  
spoken to you : but seeing ye put it from you, and judge  
yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the  
47 Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying,  
*I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou*  
48 *shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.* And  
when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified  
the word of the Lord : and as many as were ordained to  
49 eternal life believed. And the word of the Lord was  
50 published throughout all the region. But the Jews stirred  
up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men  
of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and  
51 Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts. But they  
shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came  
52 unto Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy, and  
with the Holy Ghost.

Paul's sermon produced a double effect. It roused a great deal of curiosity in Jewish circles, and it won him a large number of supporters. His success, however, excited something approaching a panic amongst the stricter Jews, who developed so bitter a hostility towards the Apostle, that he abandoned all hope of being able to convince his countrymen in Antioch, and turned to the Gentiles.

42. when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue. The words "Jews" and "Gentiles" are omitted by the best Greek MSS. The R.V. renders, "And as they (*i.e.*, Paul and Barnabas) went out, they (*i.e.*, the hearers) besought," etc. The A.V. gives the impression that it was only the

Gentiles who paid any heed to the address—which is a mistake.

43. **religious** (R.V., “devout”) **proselytes**. Probably the class of people mentioned in ver. 17. They were not actual proselytes, because they had not accepted circumcision.

44. **almost the whole city**. Antioch contained a large Jewish settlement, and consequently the excitement which Paul’s address had aroused in the synagogue soon spread amongst all classes of the population.

45. **contradicting and blaspheming**. These words are omitted in the best Texts.

46. **we turn to the Gentiles**. This marks a definite crisis in Paul’s programme. The rejection of his message by the Jews left him free to appeal to the Gentiles. The same experience was repeated at Corinth (xviii. 6) and in other places.

47. The quotation is taken from Isa. xlix. 6. Originally, of course, the prophecy referred to the Jewish nation as a whole—or rather to the ideal nation as the servant of Jehovah.

48. **as many as were ordained to eternal life**. The interpretation of this verse has always caused debate. As the words stand in the Greek, they appear to mean “as many as were appointed to obtain eternal life,” and so favour a Predestinarian interpretation. Luke may very possibly have been influenced by Paul’s opinion on the subject, and the clause may be an echo of Paul’s great statement in Rom. viii. 28–30. At the same time it must be remembered that the predestination is not absolute; for (1) the words of ver. 46, “ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life,” show clearly that human responsibility is implied;

(2) Paul's own doctrine does not exclude the freedom of human choice, upon which he insists with the utmost emphasis. This doctrine, however, is not peculiar to Paul and Luke. It was held also by (a) the Pharisees, who, as Josephus says, "maintain that all things are the work of fate and yet do not take away from men the freedom of acting as they choose;" (b) the Stoics. Cicero describes Chrysippus as "labouring painfully to explain how all things happen by fate, yet there is something in ourselves." The doctrine of Predestination, therefore, is not specifically Christian, and may even be regarded as an alien belief borrowed from the Pharisees and Stoics. There are other commentators, however, who would translate the words of Luke thus: "as many as have set themselves to obtain eternal life." There is some justification for this, because the same form of the verb is found in xx. 13, where it must be translated "as he had arranged."

50. **the devout and honourable women** (R.V., "of honourable estate"). Josephus tells us that in Damascus the wives of many of the men who were in high position were attracted to the Jewish religion. This was probably also the case at Antioch.

**out of their coasts.** R.V., "borders."

#### Acts xiv. 1-7.

#### THE MISSION TO ICONIUM.

And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks



- 2 believed. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles,  
and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.  
3 Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the  
Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace,  
and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.  
4 But the multitude of the city was divided : and part held  
5 with the Jews, and part with the apostles. And when  
there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of  
the Jews, with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to  
6 stone them, they were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra  
and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that  
7 lieth round about : and there they preached the gospel.

Driven out of Antioch, the Apostles went to Iconium, where their preaching met with considerable success both amongst Jews and Gentiles. Luke gives us no details of the work at Iconium, though they stayed there for a "long time" (ver. 3). The mission was stopped by a riot, organised by "the disaffected Jews." We have, however, a later document, known as the "Acts of Paul and Thecla," which in spite of its legendary character contains, if we are to believe Sir W. Ramsay, a kernel of truth, and gives an account of a most interesting episode in connection with Paul's visit to Iconium. Stripped of its mythical elements, the story is as follows:—During his stay at Iconium Paul lived in the house of Onesiphorus. In an adjoining mansion there resided a noble Iconian lady, named Thecla, who from her chamber could hear Paul's preaching. She was fascinated by his message, and became a Christian. This so enraged the members of her family and her affianced husband, Thamyris, that they induced the magistrates to cast Paul into prison. Thecla visited him in the prison, and when this was dis-

covered, Paul was hurriedly expelled from the city. Thecla, however, resisted all the attempts which were made to induce her to renounce her faith, and finally fled to Antioch, where she was arrested, and condemned on a charge of having insulted a pagan high priest. She had, however, a marvellous escape in the amphitheatre, the beasts refusing to touch her, and was afterwards released. She subsequently lived under the protection of Queen Tryphæna, and was the means of converting her and her household.

1. **Iconium.** An important town situated about 90 miles S.E. of Antioch. Its splendid position on the western edge of the vast plains of Central Asia Minor made it a great commercial centre.

**great multitude . . . of Greeks.** Evidently the synagogue at Iconium was attended by Greeks as well as Jews—a further proof both of the spiritual hunger of the age and the influence which was being exerted by the Jewish faith.

2. **the unbelieving Jews.** R.V., “the Jews that were disobedient;” *i.e.*, the Jews who refused to listen to Paul’s message.

3. **Long time therefore,** etc. This verse seems to contradict the statement in ver. 2, and many attempts have been made to avoid the difficulty. (a) Some ancient MSS. substitute the following for the first clause in ver. 2: “But the leaders and rulers of the synagogue incited a persecution against the righteous ones,” and add at the conclusion of the verse, “But the Lord speedily gave peace.” (b) Sir W. Ramsay suggests that the second verse should be omitted altogether. (c) Others think that the order of the two verses should be inverted, and ver. 3 put before ver. 2.

These rather violent methods, however, are scarcely necessary. Ver. 2 may surely give the reason for ver. 3. The meaning is: "Because of the attack, it was necessary for the apostles to remain for a long period at Iconium."

5. **with their rulers.** This phrase implies that the Jews were the ringleaders in the attack—the pagan magistrates would not have been likely to encourage a resort to violence. Compare also the words "to stone them," which was a Jewish mode of punishment.

6. **They were ware of it.** The Apostles had made many friends in Iconium, and it was doubtless from some of these that they obtained the information about the projected attack.

#### Acts xiv. 8-20.

#### THE MISSION TO LYSTRA.

8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet,  
 being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had  
 9 walked: the same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly  
 beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be  
 10 healed, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet.  
 11 And he leaped and walked. And when the people saw  
 what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in  
 the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in  
 12 the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter;  
 and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.  
 13 Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city,  
 brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have  
 14 done sacrifice with the people. Which when the apostles,  
 Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and  
 15 ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, Sirs, why  
 do ye these things? We also are men of like passions

with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and  
16 earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein : who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.  
17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful  
18 seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that  
19 they had not done sacrifice unto them. And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of  
20 the city, supposing he had been dead. Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city : and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

Forced to leave Iconium, the missionaries next went to Lystra. Luke's account of the mission at Lystra deals with the following points : (1) the cure of the cripple (vers. 8-10); (2) the effect produced by the miracle on the people (vers. 11-13); (3) Paul's address to the crowd (vers. 14-18); (4) the change of popular opinion owing to the intervention of Jewish agitators from Antioch and Iconium (vers. 19, 20). The most significant part of the narrative is the speech delivered by Paul, which is of a very different type from that delivered at Antioch. It is characterised by a breadth of view which is quite unlike anything we have hitherto met with in Acts, but which has its parallels in the speech at Athens (with the exception of Peter's statement in x. 35) and in certain statements of the Apostle in the opening chapters of the Epistle to the Romans.

8. **Lystra** was about 18 miles S.S.W. of Iconium. It was one of the cities of Lycaonia (ver. 6), a country in the central district of Asia

Minor, bounded on the west by Pisidia and Phrygia, on the east by Cappadocia, and on the north by Galatia proper. We gather from the narrative in Acts that the Jewish element in Lystra was much smaller than in the other cities. No synagogue is mentioned, and the population seems to have been mainly pagan.

9. The account of the cure of the cripple should be compared with the narrative of the healing of the lame man in chap. iii. There are several phrases common to both stories, though the A.V. translation, by varying the English rendering, disguises their identity. Note the following: "lame from his mother's womb" (iii. 2); "steadfastly beholding him" (iii. 4); "he leaped and walked" (iii. 8).

**The same heard.** A better translation would be: "The same used to listen to Paul as he spoke." **perceiving that he had faith.** Note the emphasis laid on faith as a condition of the healing.

10. **he leaped and walked.** There is a distinction between the tenses of these two words in the original which ought to be preserved in the translation: "he leaped up and began to walk."

11. **they lift up their voice.** The word "lift" is an old English form for the more modern "lifted" (R.V.).

**in the speech of Lycaonia.** The Lycaonians were bilingual. Paul had been speaking in Greek—a language which of course they could understand. But in talking amongst themselves they used the native Lycaonian dialect, which, as we see from the narrative, was an unknown tongue to Paul and Barnabas.

The gods have come down to us. The

conception of the possibility of the gods assuming human forms was very familiar in Greek thought, and we have many illustrations of it in Greek mythology.

**12. Jupiter. Mercurius** (R.V., "Mercury"). Jupiter, or Zeus, as he is called in Greek, was the father and king of the gods. Mercury, or Hermes, was the messenger of the gods, the attendant on Zeus, and the god of eloquence. Lystra possessed a temple devoted to the worship of Zeus, hence the suggestion that Barnabas, the more dignified and noble of the two Apostles, was the incarnation of the god of the city; while Paul, who has been described in one of the apocryphal books as "little in height, with a bald head and crooked legs," and was apparently "an ugly little Jew," to use Renan's phrase, was identified with Mercury because he was "the chief speaker."

**13. which was before their city.** R.V., "whose temple was before the city." There is no word for "temple" in the original. Probably the words "before the city" represent a title of Jupiter. A similar title has been discovered on an inscription found at Claudiopolis, in Isauria: "*To Jupiter before the city.*" The title, however, seems to have been conferred because the temple was in the suburbs.

**unto the gates** = unto the portals of the temple.

**15. of like passions.** A better rendering would be, "of like nature with yourselves." Compare Jas. v. 17.

**16, 17.** Paul's insistence on the universality of religion (note the phrase "He left not himself without witness") finds a parallel in his speech at Athens (xvii. 22-34) and in Rom. i. 19-20: "That which may be known of God is manifest.



. . . For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made—even his everlasting power and divinity ;” and also in Rom. ii. 14–15: “Gentiles . . . having no law are a law unto themselves, in that they shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith.”

19. **certain Jews from Antioch**, etc. Not content with driving Paul out of their own cities, his Jewish opponents now begin to follow him into other towns and stir up strife against him.

**having stoned Paul.** This must be the occasion alluded to in 2 Cor. xi. 25: “Once was I stoned.”

20. **Derbe** was situated to the S.E. of Lystra, and was the frontier town of the Roman province of Galatia.

#### Acts xiv. 21–28.

### THE RETURN JOURNEY THROUGH SOUTH GALATIA.

- 21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to  
22 Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the  
23 kingdom of God. And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.  
24 And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came  
25 to Pamphylia. And when they had preached the word in  
26 Perga, they went down into Attalia: and thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the

27 grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he  
 28 had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. And there they abode long time with the disciples.

After paying a visit to Derbe, the Apostles retraced their steps, returning by the same route through South Galatia. They revisited the cities of Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, and then passing through Pamphylia, made their way back to their starting-point, viz., Antioch in Syria.

21. **to that city.** *I.e.*, Derbe. No details are given, but probably the conversion of Gaius of Derbe, who is mentioned in xx. 4, was one of the fruits of this visit.

22. **we must through much tribulation.** The use of the pronoun "we" has led some scholars to conjecture that this section belongs to the "We-passages." This, however, is unlikely, as there is no trace of the pronoun elsewhere in the paragraph. Probably Luke had his readers in mind as he wrote this passage, and Paul's message to the cities of South Galatia was converted into a message to the Christians in Domitian's time by the deft use of the pronoun "we."

23. **appointed elders in every church.** The need of a definite organisation soon made itself apparent, and Paul, with true statesmanlike instinct, met it by the appointment of these elders (see n. on xi. 30). We know from inscriptions that the office of elder was common in the political and social institutions in Asia Minor.

24, 25. For Perga, Attalia, and Pamphylia, see notes on xiii. 13.

26. **from whence they had been recom-**

**mended.** See xiii. 1-3. We have no means of fixing exactly the amount of time which the first missionary journey had occupied, but it cannot well have been less than two years.

**27. opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles.** The first missionary journey had settled the question as to the applicability of Christianity to the Gentiles, and had absolutely confirmed the tentative efforts at Antioch.

### Acts xv.

## THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM.

### I. THE PROBLEM (xv. 1-5).

And certain men which came down from Judæa taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the  
 2 manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the  
 3 apostles and elders about this question. And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.  
 4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they  
 5 declared all things that God had done with them. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

Antioch had evidently been moving too rapidly for Jerusalem, and consequently it was not long before emissaries came from Jerusalem to protest

against the Gentile missions. At first sight it looks as if the description of the Council was at variance with earlier statements in Acts, which represent the principle of the admission of Gentiles as having been already settled in the case of Cornelius (xi. 18), and possibly also in the case of Antioch (xi. 22-23). Two facts, however, have always to be borne in mind: (*a*) The Church was undoubtedly prepared to recognise isolated cases of converted Gentiles, but it was not ready—at least a large number of its Jewish members were not ready—to admit the universal application of the principle, and to organise missions to the Gentiles. The Church at Jerusalem had recently been recruited from the Pharisees and the stricter Jews (cf. ver. 5), and the new element was strongly opposed to anything like the universalisation of Christianity. (*b*) While the principle of the admission of Gentiles had already been settled, nothing had been determined as to the demands which would be made upon them after their conversion. Many of those who assented to the principle seem to have tacitly assumed that Gentile converts would be required, as a result of their admission to the Church, to accept circumcision, and so become Jews. When it was found that such a condition was not enforced or even suggested, they seem to have turned hostile to the principle itself. The real question at issue before the Council was not so much whether Gentiles should be admitted, but rather whether after admission they ought not to be required to graduate in Judaism.

The account which Paul gives of the discussion in Gal. ii. is in the main consistent with the narrative in Acts, though there are some important

discrepancies upon points of detail. Sir W. Ramsay, however, and many other scholars think that the second chapter of Galatians does not refer to the same event as this passage in Acts (see n. on xi. 30).

1. **Except ye be circumcised.** The Jewish emissaries insisted that circumcision was an additional condition without which true salvation could not be attained.

2. **no small dissension and disputation** (R.V., "questioning"). The dispute between Paul and the Jewish Christians evidently raised misgiving and questioning in the minds of the Christians at Antioch.

**they determined.** "They" refers to the Church at Antioch—the R.V. makes this clear by translating "the brethren appointed."

3. **Phœnice.** See n. on xi. 19.

**declaring the conversion.** Paul and Barnabas utilised the journey by recounting the story of the mission to the Gentiles to the Christians in all the towns and villages *en route*.

4. **they were received of the church.** A meeting of the whole Church was evidently summoned for the purpose of giving a welcome to the Apostles and delegates from Antioch.

5. **certain of the sect of the Pharisees.** This phrase indicates the source of the trouble. Certain Pharisees had joined the Church and had carried their Pharisaism over into the new religion. To the Pharisee the keeping of the Jewish Law was the essential element of religion, and the converted Pharisees were anxious to make it equally essential to Christianity.

**it is needful to circumcise them.** Here

again it is plain that the demand was that circumcision should be imposed on the Gentiles not before but after conversion.

## THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM—(*continued*).

### II. PETER'S ADDRESS (xv. 6-12).

6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider  
7 of this matter. And when there had been much disputing,  
Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye  
know how that a good while ago God made choice among  
us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word  
8 of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the  
hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost,  
9 even as he did unto us ; and put no difference between us  
10 and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore  
why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the  
disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to  
11 bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord  
12 Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. Then all  
the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas  
and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had  
wrought among the Gentiles by them.

A special meeting of the leaders of the Church was held to consider the challenge of the Pharisaic Christians. After a great deal of discussion, Peter rose and recounted the story of his own work amongst the Gentiles, explaining how he had been led by the impulse of the Spirit to admit Cornelius and his Gentile friends into the Church.

6. the apostles and elders came together.



The meeting apparently was composed, not of the whole body of Church members, which would have been too unwieldy an assembly for the purpose of deliberation, but of the leaders; *i.e.*, the Apostles and the elders. Between the previous meeting of welcome and this gathering of the leaders must be placed the private conference between Paul and Barnabas and "the pillars" of the Church mentioned in Gal. ii. 2.

**7. after much disputing.** Luke does not record the debate which took place, or give us the arguments of Paul's opponents; he contents himself with recording the speeches of Peter and James, which were made at the close of the meeting.

**a good while ago.** The reference, of course, is to the conversion of Cornelius recorded in chap. x. The length of the interval between chap. x. and chap. xv. cannot be accurately determined.

**8. which knoweth the hearts.** The Greek adjective represented by this phrase is only found elsewhere in i. 24, and it is noteworthy that it is used both times by Peter.

**giving them the Holy Ghost.** See x. 44-46 and xi. 15-18.

**put no difference.** R.V., "made no distinction between them and us." See xi. 12.

**10. put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples.** The yoke is "the observance of the law," cf. Gal. v. 1, where Paul speaks of it as "the yoke of bondage."

**which neither our fathers . . . able to bear.** The Law had completely failed to ensure obedience to the will of God. Cf. Rom. viii. 3, "what the law could not do," a phrase which is illustrated by

the account of Paul's tragic spiritual struggle in Rom. vii. 7-25.

**12. kept silence.** Peter's speech produced a deep impression on the assembly, and afforded Paul and Barnabas an opportunity of describing their work.

**miracles and wonders.** R.V., "signs and wonders." The word "sign" is one of the terms employed especially by the writer of the Fourth Gospel to describe the miracles of Christ.

## THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM—(*continued*).

### III. JAMES SUMS UP THE DEBATE (xv. 13-21).

13 And after they had held their peace, James answered,  
 14 saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon  
 hath declared how God at the first did visit the  
 15 Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And  
 to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,  
 16 *After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle*  
*of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the*  
 17 *ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men*  
*might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom*  
*my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these*  
 18 *things. Known unto God are all his works from the*  
 19 *beginning of the world.* Wherefore my sentence is, that  
 we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are  
 20 turned to God: but that we write unto them, that they  
 abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and  
 21 from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses of old  
 time hath in every city them that preach him, being read  
 in the synagogues every sabbath day.

At this point James, who evidently was the president of the meeting, proceeded to sum up the

discussion. The narrative suggests that the method of settling debatable questions in the early Church resembled that which is still in vogue in the Society of Friends. No vote is ever taken amongst the Friends, but after full discussion the president states what he considers to be the sense of the meeting, and unless his statement is challenged, it is recorded as the decision of the Society. The statement of James evidently reflected the feeling of the meeting, and was accepted without opposition. The decision arrived at was, that apart from the four specific prohibitions mentioned in ver. 20 no burden was to be laid on the Gentile converts.

14. **Simeon** (R.V., "Symeon"), the Jewish form of Peter's name, occurs only here and in 2 Pet. i. 1. Its employment seems to suggest that Luke is taking pains to give the actual words of James.

15. **the words of the prophets.** Only one illustration is given, viz., the quotation from Amos ix. 11, 12, but other passages would readily occur to the minds of the audience, such as, for instance, those cited by Paul in Rom. xv. 9-12. The quotation given is taken from the Septuagint Version, which differs considerably from the Hebrew.

20. **the pollutions of idols.** This phrase is explained in ver. 29: "from things sacrificed to idols." Compare the statements of Paul in 1 Cor. viii. 1-10 and x. 23-33—passages which show that this prohibition was not regarded as binding upon the Church of Corinth.

**from fornication.** It looks at first sight as if it should have been hardly necessary to lay such stress upon the elementary virtue of chastity,

which ought to have been universally regarded as a primary and inseparable characteristic of the Christian religion. When we remember, however, that in pagan circles immorality and religion were almost convertible terms, and that the rites connected with the worship of Aphrodite and Cybele actually consecrated vice, the necessity for the prohibition becomes plain. It is no more superfluous than the words of Paul in 1 Thess. iv. 3: "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye abstain from fornication."

**from things strangled and from blood.** The prohibition of the use of blood as animal food was strongly enforced in the Mosaic law (see Lev. iii. 17, vii. 26, xvii. 10-16, xix. 26). The ground for the prohibition is found in the Jewish belief that the blood is the seat of life.

21. **For Moses of old time hath . . . R.V., "Moses from generations of old hath" . . .** Three of the prohibitions were a concession to the Pharisaic Christians, and the ground upon which James urges their adoption is the desire to avoid wounding the susceptibilities of the Jews who were scattered throughout every part of the world (see n. on ii. 5).

## THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM—(*continued*).

### IV. THE COMMUNICATION OF THE DECISION TO THE CHURCHES (xv. 22-35).

22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed

23 Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren : and  
 they wrote letters by them after this manner ; The apostles  
 and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren  
 which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and  
 24 Cilicia : forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which  
 went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting  
 your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the  
 25 law : to whom we gave no such commandment : it seemed  
 good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send  
 chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,  
 26 men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our  
 27 Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and  
 Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth.  
 28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay  
 upon you no greater burden than these necessary things ;  
 29 that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from  
 blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication :  
 from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare  
 30 ye well. So when they were dismissed, they came to  
 Antioch : and when they had gathered the multitude  
 31 together, they delivered the epistle : which when they  
 32 had read, they rejoiced for the consolation. And Judas  
 and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the  
 33 brethren with many words, and confirmed them. And  
 after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in  
 34 peace from the brethren unto the apostles. Notwith-  
 35 standing it pleased Silas to abide there still. Paul also  
 and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching  
 the word of the Lord, with many others also.

The suggestions of James were accepted by the  
 Church and embodied in a letter. A deputa-  
 tion was then appointed to convey the letter to  
 the Church at Antioch, where the dispute had  
 originated.

22. **with the whole church.** The compromise,  
 which had been arranged by the Council, had in

the meantime received the sanction of the whole Church, and the election of the delegates was also the work of the Christian assembly at Jerusalem.

**Judas surnamed** (R.V., "called") **Barsabas**. Nothing further is known of this man, though some have conjectured that he may have been the brother of Joseph Barsabas mentioned in Acts i. 23.

**Silas**. See n. on ver. 40.

**23. the apostles and elders and brethren**. The R.V. omits the conjunction between the two last words of the phrase, and renders "the apostles and elder brethren." "Elder brethren" is an allusion to the elders of ver. 6.

**24. saying . . . keep the law**. These words are omitted by the best MSS. and the R.V.

**25. being assembled with one accord**. R.V., "having come to one accord,"—a better rendering.

**28. it seemed good to the Holy Ghost**. The letter claims that the decision of the Church was reached under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

**31. rejoiced for the consolation**. *I.e.*, for the consolation which the letter produced by ending the strife.

**34**. This verse is omitted in the best MSS. and the R.V.

### Acts xv. 36-41.

#### THE PREPARATION FOR THE SECOND MISSIONARY TOUR.

36 And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.

37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose



38 surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, 39 and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and 40 sailed unto Cyprus; and Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of 41 God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

Paul remained in Antioch for a short time, until the controversy had died down, and then proposed that a fresh missionary tour should be undertaken. A dispute arose between Paul and Barnabas with regard to John Mark, whom the latter wished to take with him. This led to their separation, Barnabas and Mark going to Cyprus, Paul and Silas to South Galatia.

**36. some days after.** The interval of time implied by this phrase cannot be determined, but it was probably during this period that the episode of Peter's visit to Antioch recorded in Gal. ii. 11-21 occurred.

**37. John whose surname was Mark.** See notes on xii. 12 and xiii. 13.

**38. Paul thought not good.** Mark had deserted Paul and Barnabas at Perga, when they were about to start for South Galatia (xiii. 13). Paul evidently had been much annoyed at the incident, and so refused to take Mark. Later on, however, the two seem to have been reconciled, for we find them together at Rome: see Col. iv. 10; 2 Tim. iv. 11; Philem. 24.

**39. Barnabas . . . sailed away unto Cyprus.** Cyprus was his native country (see iv. 36, 37). Barnabas disappears from sight at this point.

Tradition relates that he subsequently visited Alexandria, and connects his name with the authorship (a) of the Epistle to the Hebrews, (b) of the Epistle of Barnabas.

40. **Paul chose Silas.** Silas had returned to Jerusalem (ver. 33), so Paul probably had to send for him, unless in the meantime he had returned to Antioch. Henceforth Silas (or Silvanus, as he is called in the Epistles) is Paul's constant companion during his second missionary tour: cf. 1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Cor. i. 19, etc.

**the grace of God.** R.V., following the best MSS., "the grace of the Lord."

41. **Syria and Cilicia.** See n. on vi. 9. We have no record as to the founding of churches in these districts, but we know from Gal. i. 21 that after his first visit to Jerusalem Paul spent some time in Syria and Cilicia, and it was probably during this period that the churches were founded.

#### Acts xvi. 1-5.

### PAUL'S SECOND VISIT TO THE FOUR CITIES OF SOUTH GALATIA.

Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but  
2 his father was a Greek: which was well reported of by  
3 the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.  
4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them

the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles  
5 and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were  
the churches established in the faith, and increased in  
number daily.

After leaving Syria and Cilicia, Paul at once proceeded to South Galatia to revisit the four cities where he had founded churches during his first missionary journey. The chief incident of the tour is the call of Timothy to mission work.

**1. a certain disciple was there.** Probably at Lystra, where Timothy had been converted during Paul's former visit. Compare 1 Cor. iv. 17, where Paul speaks of him "as my beloved and faithful child in the Lord."

**the son . . . Jewess.** The name of Timothy's mother is given as "Eunice" in 2 Tim. i. 5; his grandmother's name was Lois. Both were devout Jewesses, who seem to have been converted to Christianity through the influence of Paul.

**3. took and circumcised him.** According to the Rabbinical code, the son of a Jewish mother was regarded as a Jew. This was the reason for the circumcision. The Council of Jerusalem had waived the necessity for the rite only in the case of Gentiles. We gather from 1 Tim. iv. 14 that Timothy, like Paul and Barnabas themselves, was set apart for the work by the Church and ordained by the presbyters (the elders appointed by Paul, xiv. 23).

**4. delivered the decrees.** *I.e.*, the decisions of the Council of Jerusalem; see xv. 28, 29.

## Acts xvi. 6-10.

## THE CALL TO EUROPE.

6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost  
7 to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit  
8 suffered them not. And they passing by Mysia came  
9 down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him,  
10 saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

Paul intended, after visiting the churches in South Galatia, to extend his work by a missionary tour to other parts of Asia Minor. He found, however, on attempting to enter the provinces of Asia and Bithynia that the way was blocked by the intervention of the Holy Spirit. He pressed on northwards, and on reaching Troas received in a vision the call to Europe. This paragraph affords us a remarkable illustration of the way in which Paul's plans were overruled and enlarged by the hand of God. Paul intended to be the Apostle of Asia Minor, God meant him to be the Apostle of the whole Roman world.

6. when they had gone throughout Phrygia, etc. The R.V. makes two important changes in this verse. (a) "They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia." This alteration indicates that Luke does not mean, as the A.V. implies, that they traversed the two districts of Phrygia and Galatia, but that they went through one district

which might be called either Phrygia or Galatia, the former being its local, the latter its political designation. This may be made clearer by translating "the region of Phrygo-Galatia," *i.e.*, the part of the district of Phrygia which belonged to the Roman province of Galatia. (b) "They went through the region . . . having been forbidden," etc. In the A.V. the second clause denotes something that happened subsequently to the action indicated by the first clause. In the R.V. the second clause is prior in time to the first. There is no doubt that the order of clauses in the R.V. is the more accurate rendering of the Greek, though Sir W. Ramsay still thinks that the order given in the A.V. really represents the actual facts.

**in Asia.** *I.e.*, in the Roman province of Asia, which lay on the west coast of Asia Minor. Paul stayed at Ephesus, its capital, for two years on his third missionary journey (xix. 10).

**7. were come to Mysia.** This is a misleading translation. R.V. gives, "when they were come over against Mysia." Mysia was a district in the N.W. of Asia Minor.

**into Bithynia.** An important province on the north coast of Asia Minor, and N.E. of Mysia. Though Paul was forbidden to enter Bithynia, the province was soon evangelised. About sixty years later, we find in an official letter, written by the Roman governor of the province, Pliny the younger, to the Emperor Trajan, the statement that Christianity had permeated the country, penetrating even into the rural districts, and that as a consequence the heathen festivals were neglected, and animals for sacrifice could scarcely find purchasers.

**the Spirit suffered them not.** The R.V.

introduces a remarkable change into this phrase, viz., "The Spirit of Jesus suffered them not." There can be little doubt that, in the mind of Luke, and probably of the early Church, there is no clear distinction between the "Spirit of Jesus" and "the Holy Spirit:" cf. Rom. viii. 9; 2 Cor. iii. 17.

8. **Troas.** An important seaport and Roman colony in Mysia.

9. **a vision appeared to Paul.** Note the Divine leading throughout this passage. The summons to Europe came to Paul direct from God. Sir W. Ramsay thinks that "the man of Macedonia" is to be identified with Luke. Luke appeared to Paul in a vision and summoned him to Macedonia.

# Acts xvi. 11-18.

## PAUL AT PHILIPPI.

- 11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;
- 12 and from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city
- 13 abiding certain days. And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which
- 14 resorted thither. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she
- 15 attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she



16 constrained us. And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by sooth-  
 17 saying: the same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which  
 18 show unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

In obedience to the heavenly vision, Paul sailed at once for Macedonia and commenced work at Philippi. His mission resulted in three notable conversions, which typified the universal appeal of Paul's message: (*a*) Lydia the purple-seller represented wealth and the Jewish race; (*b*) the girl possessed with the spirit of divination represented the slave-class and the Greek nation; (*c*) the governor of the prison represented the Roman people and the official classes. Thus, rich and poor, freeman and slave, Greek, Jew and Roman, employer and employed, the commercial and official classes, alike found that the gospel preached by Paul satisfied the deepest needs of their spiritual nature.

**11. we came.** Note the commencement of the "We-passages." Luke is now speaking as an eyewitness. He probably joined Paul at Troas, since the first indication of a personal note occurs in ver. 10.

**Samothracia.** An island midway between Troas and Neapolis, in the north of the Ægean Sea.

**Neapolis.** The port of Philippi.

**12. Philippi.** An important town in Macedonia, about 8 miles from Neapolis.

**the chief city of that part of Macedonia.** R.V., "a city of Macedonia, the first of the

district." There is a difficulty about this statement, because Amphipolis seems to have been the capital of the district. There was always a rivalry between the two towns, and Luke may be purposely awarding the premier position to Philippi because of the services which the Philippians had rendered to Christians. Other scholars prefer to take the phrase in a geographical sense: "the first city of the district to which we came."

**a colony.** Philippi was originally founded by a settlement of Roman soldiers. As a Roman colony, it was a miniature reproduction of Rome itself as far as government was concerned.

**13. where prayer was wont to be made.** The R.V., following the best Greek Text, reads: "where we supposed there was a place of prayer." There were very few Jews at Philippi, and so there was no synagogue, merely a little meeting-house by the river-side.

**spake unto the women.** One of the most noticeable features connected with Paul's work in Europe is the effect produced by his message on the women of Greece; cf. xvii. 4, 12.

**14. Thyatira.** A city of Lydia famous for its dyes. Lydia derived her name from that of her native land.

**15. her household.** Another feature of the European mission is the conversion of whole households (see ver. 32 and xviii. 8). The word "household" specially refers to the slave establishment connected with the house.

**16. spirit of divination.** A literal translation of the Greek would be, "having a spirit, a Python." According to Plutarch, those who practised ventriloquism were called Pythons. The slave-girl

was supposed to be a medium through which the messages of the pagan god were conveyed to men, while she herself was in a state of trance.

17. followed Paul and cried. Compare the accounts of the action of demoniacs in the Gospels (Mark i. 25 ; Luke iv. 41).

### Acts xvi. 19-40.

#### THE IMPRISONMENT OF PAUL AND SILAS.

19 And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the  
20 marketplace unto the rulers, and brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly  
21 trouble our city, and teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. And  
22 the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat  
23 them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them  
24 safely: who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.  
25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly  
26 there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors  
27 were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners  
28 had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm; for we are all here. Then he called  
29 for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and

31 said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said,  
Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,  
32 and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the  
33 Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took  
them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes ;  
34 and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when  
he had brought them into his house, he set meat before  
them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.  
35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants,  
36 saying, Let those men go. And the keeper of the prison  
told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let  
37 you go : now therefore depart, and go in peace. But Paul  
said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned,  
being Romans, and have cast us into prison ; and now do  
they thrust us out privily? nay verily ; but let them come  
38 themselves and fetch us out. And the serjeants told these  
words unto the magistrates : and they feared, when they  
39 heard that they were Romans. And they came and be-  
sought them, and brought them out, and desired them to  
40 depart out of the city. And they went out of the prison,  
and entered into the house of Lydia : and when they had  
seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

The conversion of the soothsayer led to a protest on the part of her employers, and Paul and Silas were brought before the magistrates, who ordered them to be scourged and imprisoned. An earthquake, however, in the night, wrecked the prison. The conduct of Paul and Silas led to the conversion of the governor of the prison. Next morning the magistrates relented, and ordered the prisoners to be set at liberty. Paul, however, insisted that their summary action, in scourging them without a trial, was an illegal affront to Roman citizens, and claimed a public apology, which was readily given.

19. the hope of their gains was gone. The

soothsayer was a source of profit to her masters, and the loss of this naturally made them indignant. Compare the complaint of Demetrius (xix. 27).

20. **rulers . . . magistrates.** Two different words are used in the original for these terms. Possibly they are intended to be synonyms. The former, however, may be a wider term, and denote the whole body of public authorities, "the magistrates" referring to the *duoviri*, or two *prætors*, who presided over the administration of justice in Roman colonies.

22. **rent off their clothes.** *I.e.*, the clothes of Paul and Silas. The R.V. makes this clear by translating "rent their garments off them."

26. **a great earthquake.** Not an unusual phenomenon in the East. Sir W. Ramsay says that he has seen similar effects produced by earthquakes on Turkish prisons. The prisoners were chained to the walls, and the shock of the earthquake loosened the fastenings.

27. **was about to kill himself.** The keeper of the prison was responsible for the prisoners, and would have to answer for their escape with his life; cf. xii. 19, xxvii. 42. Hence he preferred suicide to disgrace.

30. **What must I do?** etc. The keeper of the prison had evidently been impressed by the work of Paul at Philippi, and the conduct of the prisoners had deepened this appreciation, and quickened his dormant religious consciousness.

31. **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.** The word "Christ" is omitted by the best MSS. and the R.V. The phrase "Lord Jesus Christ" is only found once in Acts, viz., xxviii. 31. In xx. 21 it is omitted in the best MSS.

35. **serjeants.** The lictors or attendants on the Roman magistrates.

36. **The magistrates have sent.** The change in their attitude may be due either to the superstitious effects produced on their minds by the earthquake, or more probably to the fact that reflection had shown them the hastiness and injustice of their action.

37. **being Romans.** The Greek is more emphatic: "men that are Romans." It was the privilege of Roman citizens to be exempt from chains and scourgings. The magistrates had violated the law on both points. The question arises, "Why did not Paul plead the privilege at the trial?" The only answer that can be given is that he probably had no chance of making his plea heard owing to the uproar.

39. **they asked them to go away from the city.** The magistrates were afraid of the mob, and anxious to avoid a second uproar.

### Acts xvii. 1-9.

#### PAUL AT THESSALONICA.

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: and Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. But the Jews which believed



not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and  
 6 sought to bring them out to the people. And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned  
 7 the world upside down are come hither also ; whom Jason hath received : and these all do contrary to the decrees of  
 8 Cæsar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when  
 9 they heard these things. And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

From Philippi Paul proceeded to Thessalonica, where he worked for some time with great success, and established a flourishing church. A riot instigated by Jews compelled him to leave the city. The short account of the work at Thessalonica which is given in Acts may be expanded from the information obtainable from the Epistles to the Thessalonians, which give a vivid picture of the relations between Paul and his converts.

1. **Amphipolis and Apollonia.** Both these towns were situated on the famous "Egnatian road," which was one of the most important lines of communication in the ancient world, and connected Europe and Asia. Amphipolis was about half-way between Philippi and Apollonia, being 33 miles from the former and 30 from the latter. Appollonia was 37 miles from Thessalonica.

**Thessalonica** was the capital of the province of Macedonia, and the most important town in the north of Greece. It was situated at the head of the Thermaic Gulf. Its population has been estimated at 200,000.

2. **three sabbath days.** The narrative gives the impression that Paul's stay at Thessalonica was limited to three weeks or a month. We gather from the First Epistle, however, that it was of much longer duration. Probably Acts refers simply to the work amongst the Jews.

3. **opening and alleging.** Paul's preaching at the synagogue dealt with two points: (a) the Scriptures prove that the Messiah must suffer; (b) Jesus was the Messiah. The statement of Acts on this point is borne out by the Epistles.

4. **some of them believed.** Paul's converts were drawn from three classes: (1) the Jews; (2) the God-fearing Greeks; (3) the chief women of the town. Some MSS. divide the second class into two, separating devout and Greeks—the former referring to the half-proselytes of whom we hear so frequently in Acts (see n. on x. 2).

5. **lewd fellows of the baser sort.** R.V., "vile fellows of the rabble." The phrase means, "some of the worst of the loungers in the market-place."

6. **rulers of the city.** The title given to these rulers in the Greek—"politarchs" or "burgomasters"—is not found elsewhere. An inscription has been discovered, however, at Thessalonica, containing the actual word—a striking testimony to the accuracy of Acts.

7. **the decrees of Cæsar.** The laws against high treason, or *lèse majesté*, which punished with great severity any insult to the Roman Emperor.

9. **taken security.** The charges evidently were not sufficiently proved to warrant imprisonment, so the magistrates merely required Jason to

give security (or bail) that the peace should not be broken.

Acts xvii. 10-15.

### PAUL AT BERŒA.

- 10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the  
 11 synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily,  
 12 whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks,  
 13 and of men, not a few. But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.  
 14 And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there  
 15 still. And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed.

Paul escaped from Thessalonica to Berœa, where he was kindly received. His malignant opponents, however, pursued him, and made it necessary for him to flee from the city. We know from the First Epistle to the Thessalonians that Paul was hoping for an opportunity to return to Thessalonica, and it was probably because they were afraid of this that his opponents were determined to drive him further away.

10. **Berea.** R.V., "Berœa." A Macedonian city situated about 50 miles S.W. of Thessalonica.

11. **more noble.** *I.e.*, in character; more open-minded, less bigoted.

12. **of the honourable women.** R.V., "Greek women of honourable estate." See n. on xvi. 13.

**of the men.** The name of one of these is known to us—Sopater, son of Pyrrhus (xx. 4).

13. **and stirred up the people.** R.V., "stirring up and troubling the multitudes."

14. **to go as it were to the sea.** R.V., "to go as far as to the sea." Paul was probably undecided as to his future plans. His friends conducted him to the coast, where an opportunity would be afforded of getting beyond the reach of his enemies. The fact that a boat was available probably decided him to sail for Athens.

**abode there still.** Silas and Timothy were less prominent than Paul, and so did not arouse so much opposition.

### Acts xvii. 16-21.

#### PAUL AT ATHENS.

16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was  
 stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to  
 17 idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with  
 the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market  
 18 daily with them that met with him. Then certain philo-  
 sophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered  
 him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other  
 some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods:  
 because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.  
 19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus,  
 saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof  
 20 thou speakest, is? For thou bringest certain strange  
 things to our ears: we would know therefore what these

21 things mean. (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)

Paul commenced work at Athens in his usual way by preaching in the Jewish synagogue. His addresses in the market-place seem to have attracted great public interest. The curiosity of certain Stoic and Epicurean philosophers was aroused, and they brought him to the Areopagus and urged him to explain his views.

**16. waited for them at Athens.** This seems to indicate that Paul did not contemplate undertaking serious work in Athens. He was simply waiting for Silas and Timothy to join him. He was too distracted by his anxiety about the work at Thessalonica to settle down peacefully in any other place. When Timothy arrived (he seems to have come to Athens alone), Paul despatched him at once to Thessalonica "to establish and comfort" the brethren (1 Thess. iii. 1-4).

**wholly given to idolatry.** R.V., "full of idols." Athens was a stronghold of paganism, and its temples were, as Luke says, "full of idols."

**17. in the market-place.** The market-place at Athens is famous in history for the philosophical discussions which took place in it. It was to Athens what Hyde Park is to London, and every phase of thought was advocated in it.

**18. The Epicureans and Stoicks.** The Epicureans and Stoics were the two great rival schools of philosophy at the time. Epicureanism (so called from its founder Epicurus, 342-270 B.C.) represented what we now term Materialism. Its advocates maintained (1) that the world was created by the fortuitous combination of indestructible atoms;

(2) that the aim of life is pleasure, which, however, the Epicureans defined as mental repose and freedom from passions; (3) that the soul perishes with the body; (4) that the gods—if gods there are—live apart and care nothing about the world or its inhabitants. The Stoics (the name is derived from the fact that their founder Zeno (360–260 B.C.) lectured in the Stoa or Porch) more nearly resembled what we now term Pantheists. They maintained (1) that God was a force immanent in nature, and that the Universe is simply the expression of this force; (2) that virtue was the one thing desirable, and that this consisted in living “conformably to nature.” All other things, *e.g.* pain, pleasure, health, riches, etc., were “things indifferent,” and ought not to be reckoned of any account. Paul had probably been brought into intimate relationship with Stoicism at Tarsus, which at this time was one of its great strongholds, and so was able to meet the philosophers on their own ground.

**this babbler.** The literal meaning of the Greek word is “picker up of trifles”—a man who hangs about the market-place to pick up scraps of gossip or scandal. It seems to have been used in a sense almost equivalent to the English “charlatan.”

**19. brought him unto Areopagus.** There are two interpretations of this phrase. (1) “They brought him to the hill called Areopagus” (Mars’ Hill). This hill is situated on the west of the Acropolis, the site of the principal temples and public buildings of Athens. It afforded an excellent opportunity for quiet discourse. (2) Sir W. Ramsay thinks, however, that the word “Areopagus” in the present passage signifies not so much the



hill itself, but the famous court of Areopagus which met on the hill. Paul was brought before the court to have his credentials examined and his qualifications to lecture tested.

Acts xvii. 22-34.

PAUL'S SPEECH AT ATHENS.

22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said,  
 Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are  
 23 too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your  
 devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO  
 THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly  
 24 worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the  
 world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of  
 heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with  
 25 hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as  
 though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life,  
 26 and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood  
 all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth,  
 and hath determined the times before appointed, and the  
 27 bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the  
 Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him,  
 28 though he be not far from every one of us: for in him  
 we live, and move, and have our being; as certain  
 also of your own poets have said, For we are also his  
 29 offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God,  
 we ought not to think that the Godhead is like  
 unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's  
 30 device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at;  
 but now commandeth all men every where to repent:  
 31 because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will  
 judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he  
 hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all  
 32 men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. And

when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again  
 33 of this matter. So Paul departed from among them.  
 34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Paul's speech at Athens is marked by the same breadth of view which characterised his address at Lystra (xiv. 15-18). Basing his remarks on an inscription which he had noticed on one of the altars, "To an unknown God," Paul dwells upon the Universality of the Divine Revelation and appeals to the convictions of the Stoics themselves in proof of his assertions, quoting from one of their poets. He then proceeds to attack idolatry and to urge upon his hearers the necessity of repentance in view of the final judgment. An allusion to the Resurrection of Christ leads to an interruption which brings the speech to an abrupt conclusion.

**22. too superstitious.** R.V., "somewhat superstitious." The word, however, may be translated "religious." This is probably the right rendering, as Paul evidently started with the intention of conciliating his audience.

**23. beheld your devotions.** The R.V. gives the explanation of this expression: "observed the objects of your worship."

**To the unknown God.** The Greek has no article, and so it is better to translate, with the R.V., "To an unknown God." We have plenty of testimony that such altars existed at Athens. Pausanias, for instance, tells us that there were at Athens "altars to gods styled unknown." These altars were built as an act of homage, though the worshipper was uncertain to which of the gods the

benefit he had received was due. Paul, however, interprets the inscription to prove that men were searching after God though they knew Him not.

**Whom therefore ye worship.** The relative pronoun in Greek is neuter, so the R.V. renders, "What therefore ye worship in ignorance."

**24. dwelleth not in temples.** An echo from Stephen's speech, to which Paul must have listened (vii. 47-50).

**26. he made of one blood all nations.** The best MSS. omit the word "blood." This verse must have appealed strongly to the Stoics, who laid great stress on the unity of human nature.

**hath determined the times before appointed.** R.V., "having determined their appointed seasons." (see n. on xiv. 16, 17).

**28. in him we live and move.** Another sentiment which must have won the approval of the Stoics.

**certain even of your own poets.** The quotation is taken from a poem of Aratus of Soli in Cilicia (flourished about 270 B.C.). It appears also in a slightly different form in Cleanthes' (300-220 B.C.) famous hymn to Zeus. The use of this quotation shows Paul's intimate acquaintance with the literature of Stoicism.

**30. And the times . . . winked at.** R.V., "The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked." This view of the Divine forbearance appears also in Paul's Epistles; cf. Rom. iii. 25.

**32. when they heard of the resurrection.** The opposition probably came from the Epicureans. The idea of a future life was accepted by many of the Stoics. There is no doubt, however, that on the whole Paul's speech missed fire. He made very

little impression on his audience, and as a result of his comparative failure he seems to have changed his methods when he reached Corinth. Compare 1 Cor. ii. 1-4.

34. **the Areopagite.** *I.e.*, a member of the court of Areopagus.

Acts xviii. 1-11.

PAUL AT CORINTH.

After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to  
2 Corinth ; and found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in  
Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla ;  
(because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart  
3 from Rome :) and came unto them. And because he was  
of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought : for  
4 by their occupation they were tentmakers. And he  
reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded  
5 the Jews and the Greeks. And when Silas and Timotheus  
were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit,  
6 and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. And when  
they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his  
raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own  
heads ; I am clean : from henceforth I will go unto the  
7 Gentiles. And he departed thence, and entered into a  
certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped  
8 God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. And  
Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the  
Lord with all his house ; and many of the Corinthians  
9 hearing believed, and were baptized. Then spake the  
Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but  
10 speak, and hold not thy peace : for I am with thee, and  
no man shall set on thee to hurt thee : for I have much  
11 people in this city. And he continued there a year and six  
months, teaching the word of God among them.

After leaving Athens, Paul proceeded to Corinth, where he made a stay of eighteen months. Luke gives us very little information about the work at Corinth—though we know from the Epistles that it marked an epoch in Paul's life.

1. **Corinth.** A most important city, situated on the Isthmus of Corinth, with harbours facing both seas. It was the commercial centre of the ancient world. Corinth was renowned for its abundant wealth, and infamous by reason of its "abysmal vice." It was one of the most cosmopolitan cities of the time, and its population was of a very mixed character. It has been described as a city of "dazzling social contrasts." Nowhere, probably, was there such a wide gulf between rich and poor, except perhaps at Rome and Alexandria.

2. **a certain Jew named Aquila.** Aquila and Priscilla play an important part in Paul's life. After helping him in his work at Corinth, they accompanied him to Ephesus, where they remained some time (xviii. 24–28; cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 19). They afterwards returned to Rome (Rom. xvi. 3, 4). Eight years later they are found again at Ephesus (2 Tim. iv. 19). At one time they risked their lives on Paul's behalf (Rom. xvi. 4). The fact that Priscilla's name is generally mentioned first has led many scholars to the conclusion that she was the more important of the two. There are some indications that she held a very important position at Rome. (1) There is a church on the Aventine which bears the name of St. Prisca, and which dates back to the fourth century. (2) In the Acts of the Martyrs it is stated that the martyr Pudens was the son of Prisca, and a bronze medal bearing the name of Pudens has been dug up in the garden

belonging to the church. (3) One of the oldest catacombs in Rome bears the name of the "cœmeterium Priscillæ," and inscriptions have been found in it in which the names of Acilius (Aquila) and Priscilla are linked together. On the basis of this evidence, Dr. Hort suggests that Prisca was a member of a distinguished Roman family, and that when she married the Jew Aquila she lost caste amongst her own friends, though she subsequently obtained a very high position in the Roman Church. Harnack thinks that the Epistle to the Hebrews was the work of Priscilla. Whether Aquila and Priscilla were Christians before they met Paul at Corinth must be left an open question.

**Pontus.** A province on the north of Asia Minor and east of Bithynia.

**Claudius.** See n. on xi. 28. Luke's statement with regard to the edict is confirmed by the Latin historian Suetonius.

3. **he was of the same craft** (R.V., "trade"). Every Jew was bound to learn a trade, and Paul was taught the trade of tent-making—a handicraft which was commonly practised in Cilicia. For references to Paul's work at his trade see xx. 34; 1 Thess. ii. 9; 2 Thess. iii. 8.

5. **pressed in spirit.** The translation of the true Text is, "was constrained by the word," "absorbed in preaching." Probably we should translate, "After the arrival of Silas and Timothy, Paul became absorbed in his message." Hitherto he had been distracted by anxiety about Thessalonica; the report of Timothy had reassured him and left him free to devote himself to the work at Corinth. For Paul's own account of the effect of Timothy's message see 1 Thess. iii. 5-10.



6. **I will go to the Gentiles.** *I.e.*, the Gentiles at Corinth. Cf. xiii. 46.

7. **named Justus.** R.V., "Titus Justus."

8. **Crispus.** Paul mentions Crispus in 1 Cor. 1-14 as one of the few persons whom he had personally baptized.

9. **Then spake the Lord to Paul, etc.** Paul had been so often hindered in his work that it is no wonder that he was discouraged and needed the stimulus of a new vision. The persecution which he suffered at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Athens, and which threatened him at Corinth, must have filled him with misgiving; cf. 1 Cor. ii. 3.

#### Acts xviii. 12-17.

#### THE TRIAL BEFORE GALLIO.

12 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made  
insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him  
13 to the judgment seat, saying, This fellow persuadeth men  
14 to worship God contrary to the law. And when Paul was  
now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If  
it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews,  
15 reason would that I should bear with you: but if it be a  
question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to  
16 it; for I will be no judge of such matters. And he drave  
17 them from the judgment seat. Then all the Greeks took  
Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him  
before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of  
those things.

The hostility of the Jews to Paul's work at Corinth came to a head at last, and they summoned

him to appear before the Roman proconsul, Gallio. Gallio, however, finding that the charge against him did not come under the cognisance of the law, dismissed the case.

**12. when Gallio was the deputy** (R.V., "proconsul") **of Achaia.** Gallio was the brother of the famous Stoic philosopher Seneca. He seems to have been a very fair-minded and popular administrator. His brother says of him, "No mortal is so dear to a single man as he is to all." Achaia, the southern portion of ancient Greece, was at this time a senatorial province, and therefore under the government of a proconsul (see n. on xiii. 7).

**made insurrection.** R.V., "rose up against Paul."

**14. a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness** (R.V., "wicked villainy"). A better translation would be: "If this were a misdemeanour or a crime" (Ramsay).

**17. Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes.** The subject of the sentence is omitted in the best MSS., and so the R.V. translates, "And they all laid hold on Sosthenes." This leaves it vague as to who the actors were. Some think that the attack on Sosthenes was made by the bystanders (Greeks), who were anxious to wipe off an old score against the Jews. Others think it was more probably the work of Jews who resented Sosthenes' failure.

**Sosthenes.** Nothing further is known about him, since we can hardly identify him with the Sosthenes of 1 Cor. i. 1.

Acts xviii. 18-22.

## PAUL'S RETURN JOURNEY.

18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn  
 19 his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow. And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into  
 20 the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented  
 21 not; but bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.  
 22 And when he had landed at Cæsarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.

The work at Corinth marks the culmination of the second missionary journey. Upon leaving Corinth, Paul set sail for Asia. He stayed a few days at Ephesus, and then pressed on to Cæsarea. Luke does not say definitely that he went to Jerusalem, but the mention of the vow makes it highly probable that this was the case.

18. **Priscilla and Aquila.** See n. on xviii. 2.

**having shorn his head in Cenchrea.** Cenchrea was the eastern port of Corinth, about 9 miles distant from it. There is nothing in the narrative which enables us to determine the character of Paul's vow. It can scarcely, however, have been a Nazarite vow (Num. vi. 1), because that involved the necessity of letting the hair grow long till the vow was completed. It probably belonged to the class of vows described by Josephus: "It is usual for those who have been afflicted with illness or with any other distress to

make vows, and for thirty days before they are to offer the sacrifices to abstain from wine and shave the hair of their head."

19. **he** (R.V., "they") **came to Ephesus.** Ephesus was the most important city in the province of Asia. It was situated at the mouth of the river Cayster, about 3 miles from the sea. Ephesus must have been in Paul's mind at the time of his projected tour into Asia (xvi. 6), and he would doubtless have stayed in the city now, had he not been pressed for time. His short visit on this occasion was probably due to the fact that it was necessary for him to change vessels at the harbour.

21. **I must by all means . . . Jerusalem.** These words are omitted in the best MSS.

**I will return again.** This promise was redeemed by Paul on his third missionary journey; see chap. xix.

22. **gone up and saluted the church.** The narrative conveys the impression that the Church at Cæsarea is here meant. In that case, however, there is no reference at all to a visit to Jerusalem; in fact, such a visit seems excluded. Many scholars suppose, therefore, that the Church which Paul saluted is the Church at Jerusalem—"the Church *par excellence*" in Palestine.

### Acts xviii. 23-28.

#### THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

23 And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order,

24 strengthening all the disciples. And a certain Jew named  
 Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty  
 25 in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was in-  
 structed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the  
 spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the  
 26 Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began  
 to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and  
 Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and ex-  
 27 pounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. And  
 when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren  
 wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when  
 he was come, helped them much which had believed  
 28 through grace: for he mightily convinced the Jews, and  
 that publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was  
 Christ.

Paul commenced his third missionary journey by revisiting the churches in South Galatia, and then started to redeem the promise which he had made to the Ephesians. The present paragraph is introductory, and gives a short account of the preparatory work which had been done at Ephesus by Apollos and by Priscilla and Aquila.

**23. went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia.** R.V., "went through the region of Galatia and Phrygia." See n. on xvi. 6.

**24. born at Alexandria.** Alexandria was the most important and influential centre of Jewish philosophy and theology. The greatest Jewish teacher of the time, Philo, had only recently died. It is clear that Apollos was imbued with the spirit of Alexandria, and he may even have been a pupil of Philo.

**an eloquent man.** R.V., "a learned man." The Greek word may mean either, and Apollos was both.

**25. instructed in the way of the Lord.** *I.e.*, in Christianity. There is no evidence to show where or from whom this instruction had been received.

**taught diligently** (R.V., "carefully") **the things of the Lord.** R.V., "the things concerning Jesus."

**knowing only the baptism of John.** *I.e.*, being ignorant of the Baptism of the Spirit; cf. xix. 2.

**26. Aquila and Priscilla** (see n. on xviii. 2) **expounded . . . more perfectly** (R.V., "carefully"). There is a considerable difficulty in this account of Apollos. In what was his knowledge deficient? We are told that "he taught accurately the things concerning Jesus." Was his ignorance limited, as has been suggested in the previous note, to the work of the Spirit? Then the phrase "expounded the way of God more carefully" seems too wide and indefinite to denote the impartation of knowledge upon a particular point. Yet on the whole the latter interpretation seems most free from difficulty. The point of the narrative in this case lies in the new emphasis which is placed on the essential necessity of a Baptism of the Spirit.

**27. into Achaia.** We know from the First Epistle to the Corinthians that Apollos visited Corinth, where he created so deep an impression that some of his followers began to depreciate Paul. Cf. also xix. 1.

**the brethren wrote exhorting the disciples.** The R.V. reads, "the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples."

**through grace.** These words may be taken in two ways: (1) as in the A.V. and R.V., with



“believed,” or (2) with “helped,” — “helped through grace them that had believed.” The former is preferable.

Acts xix. 1-7.

PAUL AND THE DISCIPLES OF JOHN  
THE BAPTIST.

And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to  
 2 Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard  
 3 whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said,  
 4 Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should  
 5 come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord  
 6 Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with  
 7 tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve.

Upon arriving at Ephesus, Paul found some disciples who had not been fully instructed in the main principles of the Christian Faith. Very possibly they were the converts or followers of Apollos. Their exact position is not quite easy to make out. On the one hand they are described as “disciples” and men who had “believed;” on the other, Paul baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus as if they had not previously been Christians. It is not possible to say exactly wherein

their defect lay. (1) They may have been merely disciples of John the Baptist, and never have advanced beyond his standpoint. (2) Their defect may have consisted in their ignorance of the Baptism of the Spirit. Like Apollos, they may have been living on the pre-Pentecostal plane of Christianity. On the whole, the second view seems the more probable.

1. **through the upper coasts.** R.V., "through the upper region,"—*i.e.*, the high-lying inland regions. The journey from Phrygo-Galatia (see xviii. 23) crossed the mountainous region in the eastern district of Asia Minor.

2. R.V., "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?" Paul's question may have been prompted either by the fact that he had heard the story of Apollos and knew of the connection between these men and him, or because he saw some deficiency in their lives and characters which could only be explained by some corresponding deficiency in their religious experience.

**whether there be any Holy Ghost.** The R.V., "whether the Holy Ghost was given," is a better translation. They could not have been familiar with the teaching of John the Baptist and yet have remained in ignorance of the existence of the Holy Spirit (Matt. iii. 11, 12).

4. **that they should believe . . . on Jesus.** This and the following verse imply that the men were not yet Christians, but see ver. 2.

6. **they spake with tongues.** There is no indication that speaking in foreign languages is implied in this phrase (see n. on ii. 1 foll.; cp. x. 46). Observe that the work at Ephesus—which commences a new and very important

chapter in Paul's life—begins with a new Pentecost (see notes on viii. 15 and x. 44).

Acts xix. 8-22.

PAUL'S WORK AT EPHESUS.

8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things  
9 concerning the kingdom of God. But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one  
10 Tyrannus. And this continued by the space of two years ; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the  
11 Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. And God wrought  
12 special miracles by the hands of Paul : so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits  
13 went out of them. Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you  
14 by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did  
15 so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know ; but who are ye ? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house  
17 naked and wounded. And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus ; and fear fell on them  
18 all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their  
19 deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men : and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty

20 thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God  
 21 and prevailed. After these things were ended, Paul pur-  
 posed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia  
 and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been  
 22 there, I must also see Rome. So he sent into Macedonia  
 two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and  
 Erastus ; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

Though Paul laboured at Ephesus for more than two years, Luke gives a most meagre account of his work. The narrative, in barest outline, summarises (1) his work among the Jews, which lasted for three months (vers. 8, 9 ; ) (2) his mission in the school of Tyrannus to the Gentiles, which occupied two years (vers. 10, 11 ) ; (3) the effect of his miracles (ver. 12). Then follows the incident of the Jewish exorcists—the only piece of detail in the narrative.

8. **disputing and persuading.** R.V., “reasoning and persuading.”

9. **spake evil of that way.** A misleading translation. R.V., “of the Way.” “The Way” was one of the terms by which the new religion was designated ; see n. on ix. 2.

**in the school of Tyrannus.** The only instance in the New Testament of the use of a public building other than the Temple at Jerusalem or a Jewish synagogue for Christian preaching or meetings of the Church. Private houses were used as a rule.

10. **two years.** Paul in his speech at Miletus (xx. 31) mentions three years as the duration of his stay in Ephesus. This, however, is an inclusive mode of reckoning, such as was common amongst Greeks and Romans. The actual duration was, as we see from this chapter, two years and three months.

**they which dwelt in Asia.** Paul's influence reached out far beyond the limits of Ephesus, and it was probably during this period that churches were founded at Colossæ, Hierapolis, Laodicea, and other towns in the province. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, which he wrote at Ephesus, contains a Salutation from "the churches of Asia" (1 Cor. xvi. 19; see also Acts xix. 26).

**11. special miracles.** In the light of the emphatic claims which Paul makes in Rom. xv. 18; 2 Cor. xii. 12 (both Epistles written soon after he left Ephesus), we cannot reasonably question the fact that Paul did work miracles. We may, however, question whether the statements in the latter part of verse 12 are to be taken quite literally (see v. 15). They illustrate the credulity and superstition of the Ephesian populace, but it is impossible to believe that such magical methods and principles could have received the sanction of the Apostle Paul.

**13. Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists.** R.V., "But certain of the strolling Jews, exorcists." These Jews wandered about from place to place claiming the power to expel evil spirits. Josephus tells us that exorcism was practised largely amongst Jews: "God gave Solomon skill against demons for the help and cure of men. And he arranged certain incantations whereby diseases are assuaged, and left behind him forms of exorcism whereby they so overpower and put to flight the evil spirits that they never return. And this method of curing is very prevalent amongst us at the present time."

**the name of the Lord Jesus.** The use of this phrase by the exorcists proves that the power of

Jesus over evil spirits was generally recognised, and is an incidental testimony to the miracles of Paul.

**14. a Jew and chief of the priests.** R.V., "a chief priest." The term "chief priest" was given in a loose sense to all who were members of the families from which the High Priest was chosen. It was unusual, however, to find a man bearing this designation outside Palestine.

**16. overcame them.** R.V., "mastered both of them." Probably only two of the seven sons of Sceva were involved in the present case.

**18. shewed their deeds.** *I.e.*, their practices connected with sorcery and witchcraft.

**19. curious arts.** *I.e.*, magical arts.

**brought their books.** *I.e.*, the books containing incantations and charms.

**fifty thousand pieces of silver.** As each denarius (or piece of silver) was worth about 9½d., the value of the whole sum was about £1980.

**21. Paul purposed in the spirit.** Paul's plans for the future involved (1) a tour through Macedonia, one object of which was to make a collection for the Church at Jerusalem (see 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2); (2) a visit to Jerusalem; (3) a further missionary journey to Rome and the West.

**22. Erastus.** Probably the treasurer of the city of Corinth (Rom. xvi. 23).

## Acts xix. 23-41.

### THE RIOT AT EPHESUS.

- 23 And the same time there arose no small stir about that  
24 way. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith,  
which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain



25 unto the craftsmen ; whom he called together with the  
workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that  
26 by this craft we have our wealth. Moreover ye see and  
hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all  
Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much  
people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with  
27 hands : so that not only this our craft is in danger to be  
set at nought ; but also that the temple of the great goddess  
Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should  
be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.  
28 And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath,  
and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.  
29 And the whole city was filled with confusion : and having  
caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's  
companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the  
30 theatre. And when Paul would have entered in unto the  
31 people, the disciples suffered him not. And certain of the  
chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, de-  
siring him that he would not adventure himself into the  
32 theatre. Some therefore cried one thing, and some an-  
other : for the assembly was confused ; and the more part  
33 knew not wherefore they were come together. And they  
drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him  
forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and  
34 would have made his defence unto the people. But when  
they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the  
space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.  
35 And when the town clerk had appeased the people, he said,  
Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not  
how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the  
great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from  
36 Jupiter ? Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken  
against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.  
37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither  
robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.  
38 Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with  
him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and

39 there are deputies : let them implead one another. But if  
 ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be  
 40 determined in a lawful assembly. For we are in danger to  
 be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no  
 cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.  
 41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

The tremendous results which followed from Paul's work at Ephesus naturally roused hostility against him. A riot was organised by Demetrius the silversmith, whose trade in the manufacture of silver models of the temple of Diana had been injured. It was with the utmost difficulty that the Town Clerk appeased the uproar and saved Paul from the tumult of the mob. There can be no doubt that the vivid picture which Luke gives of the riot at Ephesus is drawn from life. All the details—*e.g.*, the devotion of Ephesus to the worship of Diana, the authority of the Asiarchs, the intervention of the Town Clerk, the allusions to the government of the city—have been verified from inscriptions which have been discovered amid the ruins of Ephesus. Paul's own Epistles, too, bear witness to the terrible danger to which he had been exposed on many occasions at Ephesus ; cf. 1 Cor. iv. 9-13, xv. 32.

23. **about that time.** *I.e.*, soon after the events described in vers. 17-20, which seemed to promise great success in the future, and in relation to which Paul writes (1 Cor. xvi. 9): "A great and effectual door is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries."

24. **silver shrines for Diana.** R.V., "of Diana." These were small models of the goddess Diana. She was represented, as we know from coins and statues, as partly human, the upper part of her body

covered with rows of breasts (symbolising the fecundity of nature), the lower part consisting of an upright block without legs, covered with symbols and figures of animals; her head surmounted with an ornament and a veil which hung about her shoulders. The figure stood on a pedestal, over which a canopy was erected.

25. **whom he gathered together.** Probably Demetrius was president for that year of the guild of silversmiths at Ephesus.

26. **almost throughout all Asia.** See n. on ver. 10.

27. **her magnificence should be destroyed.** R.V., "and that she should even be deposed from her magnificence."

29. **Gaius and Aristarchus.** A Gaius of Derbe is mentioned in xx. 4, but it is doubtful whether he can be identified with the "Gaius of Macedonia" mentioned here. Aristarchus was a companion of Paul. We find him in xx. 4 accompanying Paul from Europe to Jerusalem, and in xxvii. 2 sharing the memorable voyage to Rome. Paul speaks of him in Col. iv. 10 as his "fellow-prisoner." The mob of Ephesus probably seized Paul's companions because they could not find the Apostle himself.

**into the theatre.** *I.e.*, the famous amphitheatre at Ephesus—the scene of the games and public exhibitions.

31. **certain of the chief of Asia.** R.V., "the chief officers of Asia." It would be better, however, to keep the technical expression used in the Greek, and translate "certain of the Asiarchs." The Asiarchs were officials appointed by the different cities of the province of Asia to super-

intend the temples erected in honour of the Roman Emperor and the Imperial games. Their chief function seems to have been to foster the Imperial spirit throughout the province, and they did this mainly by encouraging Cæsar-worship and by lavish displays of shows and games. It is in keeping with the general purpose of Acts that Luke should emphasise the kindness shown by these Imperial officials to Paul.

**33. the Jews putting him forward.** The Jews were apparently afraid that the frenzy of the mob would be turned against themselves, and so they put forward Alexander to disclaim any connection between them and Paul.

**35. the town clerk.** The secretary to the municipal council at Ephesus—an official of high importance, who is often mentioned in Ephesian inscriptions.

**a worshipper of the great goddess.** R.V., “temple-keeper of the great Diana.” The word translated “temple-keeper” was a technical title of which Ephesus was proud, as we know from its occurrence in inscriptions and on coins. An inscription of the second century describes Ephesus as “DOUBLY TEMPLE WARDEN,” because the city was responsible not only for the worship of Diana but for the worship of the Roman Emperors as well.

**the image which fell down from Jupiter.** Better, “which fell down from heaven,” as in the margin of the R.V. This was supposed to have been the origin of the image of Diana (see n. on ver. 24).

**38. the law is open.** R.V., “the courts are open;” *i.e.*, “There are the Assizes.”

**there are deputies.** R.V., “there are pro-

consuls" (see n. on xviii. 12). The plural is used rhetorically, there being only one proconsul for each province.

let them implead one another. R.V., "let them accuse one another."

39. in a lawful assembly. R.V., "in the regular assembly." The public assembly of free citizens was the final authority at Ephesus. The Town Clerk begs the turbulent citizens to wait till the next regular assembly is held, and to bring their grievances before it in an orderly manner.

40. The Town Clerk hints in this verse that the Roman authorities might exercise their right of depriving Ephesus of its "popular assembly" if the citizens were guilty of violent or illegal proceedings.

#### Acts xx. 1-6.

#### PAUL'S SECOND VISIT TO GREECE.

And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into  
 2 Macedonia. And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,  
 3 and there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he pur-  
 4 posed to return through Macedonia. And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and  
 5 Trophimus. These going before tarried for us at Troas.  
 6 And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

Luke gives us the most meagre information with regard to this second visit to Greece. Paul went first of all to Macedonia, and doubtless visited the churches at Philippi and Thessalonica. Then he made his way down south, and spent three months probably at Corinth. Then, owing to a plot, he retraced his steps through Macedonia, whence he crossed by sea to Troas.

1. **departed for to go into Macedonia.** We know from 2 Cor. ii. 13 that Paul went first of all to Troas, where he spent some time waiting for Titus, whom he had sent on an errand to the Church at Corinth.

2. **when he had gone through those parts.** *I.e.*, Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. It was during this visit that Paul wrote 2 Corinthians.

3. **when he had spent three months there.** *I.e.*, at Corinth. During this stay at Corinth Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans.

**a plot was laid against him.** The Jews evidently intended to kill him as he was on the point of embarking.

4. **Sopater of Berea.** R.V. adds, "the son of Pyrrhus." Some MSS. read Sosipater, and this suggests that he may possibly be identified with the Sosipater mentioned in Rom. xvi. 21.

**Aristarchus.** See n. on xix. 29. Nothing further is known of **Secundus**.

**Gaius of Derbe.** See n. on xix. 29.

**Tychichus.** Probably one of Paul's active helpers at Ephesus. He accompanied Paul to Rome (cf. Eph. vi. 21 and Col. iv. 7). He is called "the beloved brother and faithful minister." He is also mentioned in Tit. iii. 12 and 2 Tim. iv. 12.

**Trophimus.** Also an Ephesian; cf. xxi. 29. He



accompanied Paul during his later travels; cf. 2 Tim. iv. 20.

5. **These going before.** They crossed direct from Corinth to Troas, and did not go with Paul through Macedonia.

6. **the days of unleavened bread.** *I.e.*, the feast of the Passover.

### Acts xx. 7-16.

#### PAUL'S JOURNEY FROM TROAS TO MILETUS.

7 And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech  
8 until midnight. And there were many lights in the upper  
9 chamber, where they were gathered together. And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from  
10 the third loft, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble  
11 not yourselves; for his life is in him. When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.  
12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a  
13 little comforted. And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he  
14 appointed, minding himself to go afoot. And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to  
15 Mitylene. And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against Chios; and the next day we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next day we came to  
16 Miletus. For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus,

because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hastened, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

At Troas Paul joined his companions, and almost immediately set sail towards Syria, following the coast of Asia until he came to Miletus. The narrative contains only one incident, viz., the account of the restoration of Eutychus, who had fallen from a high window, and was taken up apparently lifeless.

**7. when the disciples came together.** R.V., "when we were gathered together." Note the re-commencement of the "We-passages."

**to break bread.** A technical expression, meaning "to partake of the Lord's Supper," which followed the Agape, or common meal; cf. 1 Cor. x. 16-21, xi. 20-34.

**ready to depart.** R.V., "intending to depart."

**9. from the third loft.** R.V., "from the third story."

**was taken up dead.** There can be little doubt that Luke regarded the man as actually dead. There is no qualifying phrase, as in xiv. 19. We must remember, too, that Luke was present on the occasion, and his medical knowledge renders his testimony valuable. At the same time, the doubt must always arise whether a proper medical examination was made, and whether the so-called death may not have been a swoon.

**10. embracing him.** Cf. the action of Elijah (1 Kings xvii. 21) and of Elisha (2 Kings iv. 34).

**13. Assos.** South of Troas and opposite the island of Lesbos.

**to go afoot.** R.V., "by land." Assos was only about 20 miles from Troas by road, and the journey

by land took much less time than was needed for the voyage round Cape Lectum.

14. **Mitylene.** The capital of Lesbos.

15. **Chios.** A large island south of Lesbos.

**Samos.** An island farther south and nearer to the coast.

**tarried at Trogyllium.** This phrase is omitted in the R.V.

**Miletus.** A famous seaport on the coast of Proconsular Asia—between 20 and 30 miles south of Ephesus.

16. **the day of Pentecost.** See n. on ii. 1.

### Acts xx. 17-38.

#### PAUL'S ADDRESS TO THE ELDERS OF EPHESUS.

17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders  
18 of the church. And when they were come to him, he said  
unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into  
Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all  
19 seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and  
with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the  
20 lying in wait of the Jews: and how I kept back nothing  
that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and  
have taught you publickly, and from house to house,  
21 testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, re-  
pentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus  
22 Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto  
Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me  
23 there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city,  
24 saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of  
these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto  
myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the

ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to  
25 testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold,  
I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching  
26 the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Where-  
fore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the  
27 blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto  
28 you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto  
yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy  
Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God,  
29 which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know  
this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in  
30 among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves  
shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away  
31 disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember,  
that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every  
32 one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I  
commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which  
is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance  
33 among all them which are sanctified. I have coveted no  
34 man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves  
know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities,  
35 and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all  
things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak,  
and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said,  
36 It is more blessed to give than to receive. And when he  
had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them  
37 all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and  
38 kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which  
he spake, that they should see his face no more. And  
they accompanied him unto the ship.

The farewell address, which Paul delivered to the Ephesian elders who met him at Miletus, is one of the most beautiful and pathetic passages in the New Testament. Paul dwells (1) on his own work at Ephesus (vers. 18-21); (2) the sufferings that awaited him in the future (vers. 22-25); and then (3)

urges the elders to be faithful in their office and to feed the Church of God (vers. 26–28); (4) warning them that false teachers would invade the Church and make havoc of the flock (vers. 29, 30); and finally (5) makes a last appeal to them to follow his own example and devote their lives to the service of their fellows (vers. 31–35).

**17. elders of the church.** See notes on xi. 30 and xiv. 23.

**18.** The R.V. translates more accurately, “Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time.”

**19.** R.V., “with all lowliness of mind and tears.” “Lowliness of mind” is a conception often emphasised in Paul’s Epistles: cf. Phil. ii. 3; Col. iii. 12.

**temptations.** R.V., “trials,”—the word refers to outward and not inward experiences.

**by the lying-in-wait** (R.V., “by the plots”) **of the Jews.**

**21. faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.** The word “Christ” is omitted in the best MSS., though it is retained by the R.V. See n. on xvi. 31.

**22. bound in the spirit.** Or, as the phrase may be translated, “constrained by the Spirit.” Paul’s actions are always “under constraint of the Spirit”; see xiii. 4, xvi. 6, xxi. 4 (see note).

**24.** Owing to an alteration in the Greek Text, the R.V. translates the opening part of this verse, “But I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself.” It also omits the phrase “with joy.”

**25. ye all . . . shall see my face no more.** It is uncertain whether these words were actually fulfilled. In the Epistle to Philemon, Paul ex-

presses the hope that he will be able to visit Asia again (ver. 22), and the Pastoral Epistles imply that this wish was realised. On the other hand, it must be remembered that the authorship of the Pastoral Epistles is extremely doubtful, and their evidence is not therefore convincing. All that we can say is that the spirit of despondency which this speech displays was modified to some extent after Paul reached Rome, and that, in spite of what he said to the Ephesian elders, the time came when he was hopeful of being able to revisit Asia.

28. **over which** (R.V., "in the which") **the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers** (R.V., "hath made you bishops"). This is the first occurrence of the term "overseer" or "bishop" as a designation of the officers of the Church. We find it used shortly afterwards in the opening verse of Paul's Epistle to the Philippians. It is quite clear that "elders" and "bishops" are synonymous terms (compare ver. 17 and ver. 28), the latter describing the function or duty of the former. The elders were appointed to "oversee" or superintend the work and organisation of the Church. The same identification of the two terms is found in 1 Pet. v. 1, 2; 1 Tim. iii. 1-7, v. 17-19; Tit. i. 5-7. The term "bishop," like "elder," is found in use as the designation of certain officials in pagan societies, and no doubt this fact helped to popularise its adoption by the Christian Church.

**to feed the church of God.** The MSS. are divided, some reading "the church of God," as in A.V. and R.V., others "the church of the Lord," *i.e.* of Christ. The latter reading is simpler. "The church of Christ which he purchased with his own blood" is a perfectly natural statement. But "the



church of God which he purchased with his own blood" is more difficult, and can only be explained by translating "with the blood that was his own;" *i.e.*, the blood of His own Son. It is scarcely possible to argue that in the phrase "church of God," God stands for Christ, and to quote this passage in proof of the Divinity of Christ. Whatever reading be adopted, it should be observed that this is the only instance in Acts where stress is laid on the atoning value of the death of Christ.

29. **grievous wolves.** *I.e.*, false teachers. The prophecy was speedily fulfilled, as we know from the Epistle to the Colossians, in which Paul combats a fatal heresy which had arisen in the churches of Asia.

31. **three years.** See n. on xix. 10.

32. This verse is full of Pauline phrases and ideas, and bears the stamp of genuineness. Terms like "grace," "build up," "an inheritance among the sanctified," are characteristic of Paul, and frequently occur in the Epistles: cf. Eph. i. 18, ii. 20; Col. iii. 24.

34. **these hands have ministered.** See n. on xviii. 3.

35. **remember the words of the Lord Jesus.** The words quoted are not found in the Gospels, but this does not militate against their genuineness. We have a considerable number of sayings of Jesus preserved in various writers which do not occur in the Gospels. The Gospel narrative is fragmentary, and never claims to be exhaustive (cf. John xxi. 25). The only difficulty is that Paul never quotes the specific words of Jesus in the Epistles (except in the doubtful case of 1 Tim. v. 18), though he often alludes to His teaching in

a general way (compare 1 Cor. vii. 10-12; Rom. xiii. 6-9).

## Acts xxi. 1-16.

THE JOURNEY FROM MILETUS TO  
JERUSALEM.

And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto  
2 Patara : and finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we  
3 went aboard, and set forth. Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre : for there the ship was to unlade her  
4 burden. And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days : who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should  
5 not go up to Jerusalem. And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way ; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city : and we kneeled down on the shore,  
6 and prayed. And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship ; and they returned home again.  
7 And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with  
8 them one day. And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Cæsarea : and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was  
9 one of the seven ; and abode with him. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.  
10 And as we tarried there many days, there came down from  
11 Judæa a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the  
12 Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

13 Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break  
mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also  
14 to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And  
when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The  
15 will of the Lord be done. And after those days we took  
16 up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem. There went  
with us also certain of the disciples of Cæsarea, and brought  
with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with  
whom we should lodge.

After bidding farewell to the Ephesian elders, Paul continued his voyage. Changing ships at Patara, he sailed to Tyre, where the vessel stayed seven days to discharge her cargo. This gave Paul an opportunity of intercourse with the brethren there. The ship next touched at Ptolemais, and the voyage finally ended at Cæsarea. At Cæsarea Paul stayed for "many days" with Philip the Evangelist, before proceeding on his overland journey to Jerusalem. Both at Tyre and Cæsarea the utmost pressure was put upon Paul by his friends to abandon the projected visit to Jerusalem, since it was bound to be attended with the gravest risk, and might end in his imprisonment and even martyrdom. Paul, however, was resolute, and refused to be dissuaded from his programme.

1. **gotten from them.** R.V., "parted from them."

**Cos.** A small island, now called Stanchio, off the Carian coast, on the S.W. of Asia Minor. **Rhodes.** A large island at S.W. extremity of Asia Minor, off the coast of Lycia and Caria. **Patara.** A seaport on the coast of Lycia. **Phenicia.** R.V., "Phœnicia." See xi. 19.

3. **when we had discovered Cyprus.** R.V., "when we had come in sight of Cyprus."

**Tyre.** One of the chief ports of Phœnicia: "an

emporium for the commerce of the whole world" (Jerome). See xii. 20.

4. **finding disciples.** R.V., "having found the disciples." Christianity was first carried to Phœnicia by the refugees who fled from Jerusalem after Stephen's martyrdom (xi. 19), and Paul had visited the district with Barnabas on a previous occasion (xv. 3).

**said to Paul through the Spirit.** See n. on xx. 22. Paul felt an inward compulsion drawing him to Jerusalem. If that inward compulsion came to him from the Spirit, a difficulty arises. The Spirit says one thing to Paul, another thing to the Christians at Tyre. The narrative appears to convey the impression that Luke thought Paul was wrong and the Christians at Tyre right in their interpretation of the meaning of the Spirit. At any rate, Paul was face to face with a "conflict of duties," or rather, a conflict of spiritual inspirations, and he held tenaciously to his own convictions.

7. **Ptolemais.** The modern Acre, a seaport about 30 miles south of Tyre.

8. The R.V. omits the phrase "we that were of Paul's company."

**Cæsarea.** The most important seaport in Judæa, and from a political point of view the capital of the province and the seat of the Roman governor; cf. viii. 40, x. 1. Some scholars think that the journey from Tyre was made on foot, but it seems more probable that Paul continued on the ship, as there is no allusion to the "baggage" till we reach ver. 15.

**Philip the evangelist.** Cf. viii. 5-13, 26-40. Philip lived at Cæsarea, where he settled after his mission to Samaria (viii. 40). The term "evangelist"

is found in the Epistles, denoting a special order of Christian preachers distinct from "apostles" and "prophets:" cf. Eph. iv. 11; 2 Tim. iv. 5.

**one of the seven.** See vi. 1-6.

**9. four daughters.** The mention of the daughters of Philip is another illustration of Luke's habit of emphasising the work done by women in the early Church. According to later tradition, Philip and his daughters subsequently settled at Hierapolis, where they exercised a great influence.

**10. a certain prophet.** See n. on xi. 27; compare xiii. 1. **Agabus.** See xi. 28.

**11.** The symbolic action of Agabus has many parallels in the history of Old Testament prophecy: cf. Isa. xx. 3; Jer. xiii. 1-7, xix. 10, 11; Ezek. iv. 1-3; v. 1-4.

**13. What mean ye?** R.V., "What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart?"

**15. we took up our carriages.** R.V., "we took up our baggage." The word "carriage" is used no less than six times in the A.V. for baggage. Compare 1 Sam. xvii. 22; Judg. xviii. 21; Isa. x. 28.

**16. and brought with them one Mnason.** Many scholars think that the sentence should be translated "brought them to one Mnason with whom they should lodge." If this translation is right, it is probable that Mnason lived in some place about half-way between Cæsarea and Jerusalem. The distance between these two cities was about 60 miles. The friends from Cæsarea conducted Paul and his companions to Mnason's house and then returned home.

**an old disciple.** R.V., "an early disciple;" i.e., one of the original disciples.

## Acts xxi. 17-26.

## PAUL AND THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM.

17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren re-  
18 ceived us gladly. And the day following Paul went in  
with us unto James ; and all the elders were present.  
19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly  
what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his  
20 ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified the  
Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many  
thousands of Jews there are which believe ; and they are  
21 all zealous of the law : and they are informed of thee,  
that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the  
Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to  
circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.  
22 What is it therefore ? the multitude must needs come  
23 together : for they will hear that thou art come. Do  
therefore this that we say to thee : We have four men  
24 which have a vow on them : them take, and purify thy-  
self with them, and be at charges with them, that they may  
shave their heads : and all may know that those things,  
whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing :  
but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the  
25 law. As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have  
written and concluded that they observe no such thing,  
save only that they keep themselves from things offered to  
idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from  
26 fornication. Then Paul took the men, and the next day  
purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to  
signify the accomplishment of the days of purification,  
until that an offering should be offered for every one  
of them.

Paul was kindly received by James and the  
elders of the Church at Jerusalem. The hostility



of the Jewish Christians, however, remained unabated; in fact, every fresh triumph of Paul seemed only to add fuel to the flames. To conciliate his suspicious opponents, James urged Paul to make a public exhibition of his sympathy with Jewish customs by assisting four poor Jews to perform their vows in the Temple—a request to which Paul readily acceded.

18. **James.** See n. on xii. 2, 17, and xv. 13–21.  
**elders.** See n. on xi. 30.

20. **how many thousands of the Jews.** R.V., “how many thousands there are among the Jews which have believed.” As it was the time of Pentecost (xx. 16), Jerusalem would be crowded with Jews, and amongst them would be many Jewish Christians who like Paul had come up to Jerusalem to keep the feast.

21. **thou teachest the Jews . . . to forsake Moses.** This was, of course, a calumny. Paul had always shown himself perfectly loyal to Jewish customs, though naturally the spirit of the new religion tended to attach less and less significance to Jewish forms and ceremonies.

22. **the multitude must needs come together.** Omitted by the R.V.

23. **four men which have a vow.** The vow was probably a Nazarite vow (Num. vi. 1). See n. on Acts xviii. 18.

24. **purify thyself with them—join them in the ritual of purification. be at charges with them—undertake the expenses of the sacrifice. that they may shave their heads—in indication that the vow was complete.** See Num. vi. 5.

25. See n. on xv. 20 and 41.

26. **to signify the accomplishment.** *I.e.*, to

give notice to the officials of the Temple that on a specified day the vow would be completed and the sacrifices offered in accordance with the regulations; cf. Num. vi.

Acts xxi. 27-39.

PAUL'S ARREST AT JERUSALEM.

27 And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which  
were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up  
28 all the people, and laid hands on him, crying out, Men  
of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men  
every where against the people, and the law, and this  
place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple,  
29 and hath polluted this holy place. (For they had seen  
before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom  
they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)  
30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together:  
and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and  
31 forthwith the doors were shut. And as they went about  
to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band,  
32 that all Jerusalem was in an uproar: who immediately took  
soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and  
when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they  
33 left beating of Paul. Then the chief captain came near,  
and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two  
chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had  
34 done. And some cried one thing, some another, among  
the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty  
for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the  
35 castle. And when he came upon the stairs, so it was,  
that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the  
36 people. For the multitude of the people followed after,  
37 crying, Away with him. And as Paul was to be led into  
the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak

38 unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek? Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers? But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.

Just before the completion of the vow, an attack was made on Paul by the Jewish mob, instigated by some Jewish visitors from the province of Asia, who charged him with profaning the Temple by introducing a Gentile into it. An uproar ensued, and Paul would probably have lost his life had it not been for the intervention of the captain of the Roman garrison, who came with a body of soldiers and rescued Paul from the crowd, and carried him off to the fortress of Antonia.

**27. the seven days.** The period which elapsed before the completion of the vow.

**the Jews . . . of Asia.** They had become acquainted with Paul in Asia. Their presence in Jerusalem is accounted for by the fact that they had come up to keep the feast of Pentecost.

**28. brought Greeks also into the temple.** The Greeks could enter "the Court of the Gentiles;" none but Jews, however, were allowed into the inner courts of the Temple, on pain of death. An inscription has been discovered on a pillar which formed part of "the middle wall of partition" between "the Court of the Gentiles" and the Temple proper, to the following effect: "No man of another nation to enter within the fence and enclosure round the Temple. And whoever is caught will have himself to blame that his death ensues."

**29. Trophimus the Ephesian.** See n. on xx. 4.

30. **drew him** (R.V., "dragged him") **out of the Temple.** Lest the Temple should be profaned by his murder.

**the doors were shut.** Probably by the Temple police, to prevent any damage being done to the buildings in the riot.

31. **chief captain of the band.** The chief military officer of the garrison which the Romans always kept in the fortress of Antonia—a building adjoining the Temple—for the purpose of maintaining peace in the city. His name was Claudius Lysias (xxiii. 26).

32. **centurions.** See n. on x. 1.

34. **into the castle.** The fortress of Antonia, which was situated on the north side of the Temple, and communicated with it by means of cloisters and stairs. A cohort of Roman soldiers was always stationed in it to prevent outbreaks of disorder, which were frequent at Jerusalem, especially at the time of the festivals.

36. **Away with him!** The same cry which was raised by the Jewish mob against Jesus (Luke xxiii. 18).

38. **Art not thou then that Egyptian?** The chief captain had come to the conclusion that Paul was the Messianic pretender, known as the Egyptian, who had recently tried to raise a revolt against Rome. Josephus tells us that in the time of Felix the Egyptian gathered together 30,000 men on the Mount of Olives and announced that at his word the walls of the city would fall down. Felix, however, speedily made an attack. The Egyptian fled, and the greater part of his followers were captured or slain. There is a discrepancy between Josephus and Acts with regard to numbers,

but little importance need be attached to it, as Josephus' own statements are not consistent on the point. In another place he puts the number of killed at 400 and the number of prisoners at 200.

**that were murderers.** R.V., "of the Assassins." The Assassins were a secret political society of Jewish fanatics, so called because they carried concealed daggers and assassinated their opponents. Josephus describes them thus: "There sprang up a body of plunderers in Jerusalem called Sicarii. They kill men by daylight in the midst of the city. Particularly at the feasts they mix with the crowd, carrying small daggers hid under their clothes. With these they wound their adversaries, and when they have fallen, the murderers mix with the crowd and join in the outcry against the crime."

**39. of Tarsus . . . no mean city.** Tarsus was the capital of Cilicia. It was a University town, and was famous for its philosophy and culture. It was at this time one of the great centres of Stoicism. Strabo ranks Tarsus even above Athens and Alexandria for its love of learning, and says that it sent its scholars all over the world.

Acts xxi. 40-xxii. 21.

### PAUL'S DEFENCE BEFORE THE JEWS.

40 And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them  
1 in the Hebrew tongue, saying, Men, brethren, and fathers,  
2 hear ye my defence which I make now unto you. (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to  
3 them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,) I am

verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this  
4 day. And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding  
5 and delivering into prisons both men and women. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.  
6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there  
7 shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me,  
8 Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus  
9 of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they  
10 heard not the voice of him that spake to me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told  
11 thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into  
12 Damascus. And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt  
13 there, came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour  
14 I looked up upon him. And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice  
15 of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men  
16 of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins,  
17 calling on the name of the Lord. And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I  
18 prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; and saw him



saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem : for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee :  
 19 and when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept  
 20 the raiment of them that slew him. And he said unto me, Depart : for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

After obtaining the permission of Claudius Lysias, Paul addressed his fellow-countrymen in Hebrew from the steps of the fortress of Antonia. He tries to overcome the prejudice of his opponents, by recounting the story of his life. He shows that at one time he had been as bitterly hostile to Christianity as they were, but that hostility had been overpowered by the vision which appeared to him on the road to Damascus. The speech thus contains the second of the three accounts of the conversion of Paul which are found in Acts (see notes on ix. 1-9).

40. **given him licence.** R.V., "given him leave."

**in the Hebrew tongue.** *I.e.*, in the vernacular Hebrew or Aramaic, as it is called. Paul used Aramaic in order to conciliate his countrymen (see xxii. 2).

xxii. 3. **born in Tarsus.** See n. on xxi. 39.

**brought up in this city.** We do not know at what age Paul left Tarsus and came to Jerusalem, but at any rate he received the most important part of his education at Jerusalem.

**at the feet of Gamaliel.** See n. on v. 34.

**taught according to, etc.** R.V., "instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers." Compare Gal. i. 13 ; Phil. iii. 4-6.

4. **and I persecuted this way** (R.V., "this Way"). See n. on ix. 2.

**binding and delivering into prisons.** See ix. 1, 2, xxvi. 10; Gal. i. 13.

5. **all the estate of the elders.** *I.e.*, the Jewish Council or Sanhedrin. See n. on iv. 5.

**letters unto the brethren.** Compare ix. 1, 2, xxvi. 12.

6-10. The account is substantially identical with that given by the historian in chap. ix. For the discrepancies between the three accounts see n. on ix. 7.

12. **Ananias, a devout man.** This account of the conversation between Ananias and Paul is not given in chap. ix., which, however, recounts the story of the way in which Ananias was divinely prepared to receive Paul.

14. **hath chosen thee, etc.** R.V., "hath appointed thee to know his will."

**see that Just One.** R.V., "see the Righteous One," *i.e.*, Jesus. Cp. iii. 14, where Jesus is called "the Holy and Just One." See also vii. 52.

15. **a witness . . . unto all men.** It seems probable that Paul's account of Ananias' words is coloured by later events. It is hardly probable that the mission to the Gentiles was laid upon Paul immediately after his conversion, though there is no doubt that Paul himself dated his call to work amongst the Gentiles back to his conversion; see Gal. i. 15, 16.

16. **be baptized and wash away thy sins.** There can be little doubt that this phrase implies a connection between baptism and the forgiveness of sins. Compare also Eph. v. 25, 26, "Christ also loved the church . . . having cleansed it by the

washing of water with the word;" Tit. iii. 5, "According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." It is highly probable that this magical view of baptism is due to the influence of the current popular conceptions on the subject. The poet Ovid in a well-known passage protests against "easy-going people who think that the sad crime of murder can be removed by river water" (*Fasti*, ii. 45). Many instances can be given of similar views in connection with Greek and Egyptian worship, and also in the rites of Mithras (see Pfeleiderer, *Early Christian Conception of Christ*, pp. 117-124). The doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration is therefore not specifically Christian, but rather seems to belong to the large class of superstitious ideas which passed into Christianity from paganism.

17. **And it came to pass.** Three years must have elapsed between this and the previous verse. See n. on ix. 23.

18. **I was in a trance and saw him.** Nothing is said about this vision which came to Paul in the Temple in chap. ix. or xxvi., and there is no allusion to it in the autobiographical passage in Galatians, unless i. 15, 16 may be taken as a reference to it; but we know from 2 Cor. xii. 1 that Paul had many "visions and revelations of the Lord."

19. **Lord, they know.** Paul evidently wished to remain in Jerusalem, and so he makes excuses for the unreadiness of the Church to receive him.

20. **the blood of thy martyr Stephen.** R.V., "the blood of Stephen thy witness." For Paul's participation in the martyrdom, see vii. 58.

## Acts xxii. 22-29.

## THE EFFECT OF PAUL'S SPEECH.

- 22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.
- 23 And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw
- 24 dust into the air, the chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore
- 25 they cried so against him. And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and
- 26 uncondemned? When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou
- 27 doest: for this man is a Roman. Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman?
- 28 He said, Yea. And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But
- 29 I was free born. Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

The Jewish mob listened to Paul's apologia without interruption until he uttered the hated word "Gentile." Then they broke out into a frenzy of excitement, and made preparations to stone him. The chief captain, however, intervened, and Paul was carried into the fortress of Antonia. The captain then ordered his officers to torture Paul into confessing his crime. Paul protested against the illegality of the order on the grounds of his Roman citizenship. The protest was accepted and the order cancelled.

22. **unto this word.** *I.e.*, the word "Gentile."  
See ver. 21.

23. **cast off their garments.** Probably, as in vii. 58, that they might be able to stone Paul.

24. **examined by scourging.** Torture was commonly resorted to as a means of extorting a confession from the prisoner.

25. **as they bound him with thongs.** R.V., "when they had tied him up with the thongs." Under the Roman system of scourging, the culprit was stripped and tied in a bending posture to a pillar, or stretched on a frame, and the punishment was inflicted with a scourge made of leathern thongs weighted with sharp pieces of bone or lead. The thongs mentioned in the present passage seem to be the straps with which Paul was bound to the pillar. If they refer to the thongs of the scourge, it would be necessary to translate the sentence, "when they had tied him up for the thongs."

**a man that is a Roman.** See n. on xvi. 37. The captain had been guilty of a double illegality: (1) in ordering a Roman citizen to be scourged; (2) in condemning a prisoner without a trial.

28. **With a great sum obtained I this freedom** (R.V., "this citizenship"). In the time of the Emperor Claudius the privilege of Roman citizenship was sold to provincials by court officials, and it was in this way that the chief captain had obtained it.

**I was free born.** R.V., "I am a Roman born." Paul's father or one of his ancestors must have received the citizenship as a reward for service rendered to Rome.

29. **should have examined him.** *I.e.*, by torture See ver. 24.

Acts xxii. 30-xxiii. 10.

## PAUL BEFORE THE COUNCIL.

- 30 On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and  
1 set him before them. And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good  
2 conscience before God until this day. And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him  
3 on the mouth. Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the  
4 law? And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's  
5 high priest? Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, *Thou shalt not*  
6 *speak evil of the ruler of thy people*. But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and  
7 resurrection of the dead I am called in question. And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was  
8 divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees  
9 confess both. And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.  
10 And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle.

Unable to discover the grounds of the Jewish



hostility against Paul or to find out his crime, Claudius Lysias determined to bring him before the Council. When the Council met, a scene of great disorder ensued. The High Priest Ananias refused Paul a hearing, and ordered some bystanders to smite him on the mouth. Paul retaliated sharply, calling Ananias "a whited wall." A protest was raised, and Paul subsequently adopted a more conciliatory tone. By a skilful and adroit move, he created dissension between the two rival parties on the Council, and secured the sympathy of the Pharisees. A serious uproar followed, and fearing that the consequences might be serious, the chief captain rescued Paul by force and took him back into the fortress of Antonia.

**30. he loosed him from his bands.** The last three words are omitted by the R.V. They evidently ought not to be in the Text, because as a Roman citizen Paul was exempt from chains. "Loosed him" must therefore mean "loosed him from confinement."

**all their council.** See n. on iv. 5.

xxiii. 1. **earnestly beholding.** R.V., "looking stedfastly."

**I have lived.** The Greek word used here means "I have lived as a citizen," and so the phrase refers to Paul's public life as a member of the Jewish community.

**in all good conscience.** There is a difference between the meaning of the Greek word translated "conscience" and our modern conception of conscience. The Greek word denotes a faculty which passes judgment on actions after they have been done. Conscience therefore did not mean to Paul, as it means to us, the source of all moral

obligation, but rather a faculty which expressed approval or disapproval of deeds already done. The clause therefore means: "My public life has been devoted to the service of God and has met with the approval of my conscience." The word occurs several times in Paul's Epistles, but never elsewhere in the New Testament, except in 1 Pet. ii. 19 and John viii. 9.

2. **Ananias** was High Priest from 47-59 A.D. According to Josephus, he was a most unscrupulous man,—“a great hoarder up of money,”—collecting his tithes by violence from the threshing-floors, and defrauding the inferior priests of their dues. In the reign of Claudius he was summoned to Rome, in 52 A.D., on account of his suspected complicity in a massacre of the Samaritans, but was acquitted through the influence of Agrippa II. He met with a violent end, being murdered by the insurgents at the time of the great rebellion in Jerusalem.

3. **God shall smite thee.** Paul's passionate outburst stands in striking contrast to the meekness displayed by Jesus under similar circumstances. The prophecy was fulfilled. See n. on ver. 2.

**whited wall.** Compare “whited sepulchres,” Matt. xxiii. 27. A proverbial expression, indicating that Ananias was not what he seemed to be—*i.e.*, a minister of justice.

**after the law.** R.V., “according to the law.”

5. **I wist not,** etc. A great deal of unnecessary difficulty has been discovered in these words. The meaning is quite simple. Paul simply states the fact that he was not aware that Ananias was the High Priest. The question has been asked,

How could Paul plead ignorance, as Ananias' position as president of the Council would make his office clear? The probable answer is, that Ananias may not have been presiding on this occasion; Lysias had summoned a special meeting of the Council, and so he may have conducted the inquiry himself.

**Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler** (R.V., "a ruler"). The quotation is taken from Ex. xxii. 28.

6. **But when Paul perceived.** Luke represents Paul as deliberately intending to sow dissension between the different parties in the Council, in order to divert the attack from himself. Even if Luke is right, there is no reason why Paul's brilliant piece of tactics should be condemned on ethical grounds. If his statements had been insincere or untrue to fact, the case would be different. At the worst, all that Paul did was to state the charge against himself in a form which he knew would provoke a controversy between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, hoping that the strife between the two parties would lead to his own escape. If the Council of Jerusalem had been an ideal court of justice, we might have required an ideal course of action from Paul, but we must remember that he was arguing before a tribunal which was bent upon perpetrating an act of gross injustice, and adopted the only available method of saving himself from an illegal condemnation. Moreover, before we condemn Paul, we must assure ourselves that Luke is correct in imputing the motive to his conduct. It is by no means outside the bounds of possibility that Paul's action may have been quite disingenuous, and

that the effect which it produced led the historian or his informant to regard it as a deliberate scheme to introduce division into the Council.

**the son of a Pharisee.** R.V., "a son of Pharisees." Paul's family for at least two generations must have belonged to the Pharisaic party.

**of (R.V., "touching") the hope and resurrection.** The two words, "hope" and "resurrection," contain separate ideas. The phrase is not "hope of the resurrection," but "hope and the resurrection." "Hope" must be taken in a wide sense, "our hope for the future," though, of course, this "hope" is necessarily conditioned by and dependent on a belief in the resurrection. In the allusion which Paul makes to his statement in xxiv. 21, the word "hope" is omitted.

**7. and the multitude was divided.** R.V., "the assembly was divided."

**8. there is no resurrection.** This statement is borne out by the testimony of Josephus, who says that the Sadducees "take away the belief in the immortal existence of the soul."

**9. a great cry.** R.V., "clamour."

**scribes . . . of the Pharisees' part.** The "scribes" were the skilled interpreters of the Scripture—Biblical experts, so to speak. Most of them, but not all (compare Mark ii. 16; Luke v. 30), were associated with the Pharisees, with whom they are generally connected in the New Testament.

**let us not fight against God.** These words ought to be omitted, as in the R.V. This leaves the sentence apparently incomplete. It is probably an exclamatory phrase—"What if a spirit hath spoken to him, or an angel!"

## Acts xxiii. 11-22.

## THE JEWISH CONSPIRACY AGAINST PAUL.

- 11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said,  
Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me  
at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.
- 12 And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together,  
and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would  
13 neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. And they  
were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.
- 14 And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said,  
We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will  
15 eat nothing until we have slain Paul. Now therefore ye  
with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring  
him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would enquire  
something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever  
16 he come near, are ready to kill him. And when Paul's  
sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and  
17 entered into the castle, and told Paul. Then Paul called  
one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young  
man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to  
18 tell him. So he took him, and brought him to the chief  
captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto him,  
and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who  
19 hath something to say unto thee. Then the chief captain  
took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately,  
20 and asked him, What is that thou hast to tell me? And  
he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou  
wouldest bring down Paul to morrow into the council, as  
though they would enquire somewhat of him more per-  
21 fectly. But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in  
wait for him of them more than forty men, which have  
bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat  
nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they  
22 ready, looking for a promise from thee. So the chief

captain then let the young man depart, and charged him, See thou tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me.

The Council having been thwarted in its attempt to get rid of Paul, owing to its own divisions and the careful protection of Claudius Lysias, a band of Jews, more than forty in number, formed a plot to assassinate him. They arranged with the Council to ask Lysias to bring Paul down again for further examination, and determined to murder him on the way from the fortress of Antonia to the Council chamber. Information, however, reached the ears of Paul's nephew, and he disclosed the plot to the governor.

**11. thou must bear witness also at Rome.** It had been Paul's ambition for some time to go to Rome (see xix. 21; Rom. i. 11-13). This vision introduces the third section of Acts (see n. on i. 8), and leads up to the climax of the book.

**12. certain of the Jews.** The first two words are omitted in the R.V.

**14. We have bound ourselves.** Literally, "With a curse have we cursed ourselves,"—a Hebrew mode of expression, denoting intensity of feeling and earnestness of action.

**15. to morrow.** Omitted in R.V., which translates "that he bring him down unto you, as though ye would judge of his case more exactly."

**16. Paul's sister's son.** This is the only reference we have to Paul's relatives. Paul's sister and her family probably resided in Jerusalem.

**20. as though they would enquire.** The R.V. substitutes "thou" for "they." The change represents an attempt on the part of the conspirators



to throw the responsibility on to Claudius Lysias, and is probably meant to be an improvement on the scheme in ver. 15.

Acts xxiii. 23-35.

**CLAUDIUS LYSIAS SENDS PAUL TO FELIX.**

23 And he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Cæsarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third  
24 hour of the night; and provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the  
25 governor. And he wrote a letter after this manner:  
26 Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix  
27 sendeth greeting. This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an  
28 army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman. And when I would have known the cause where-  
29 fore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council: whom I perceived to be accused of questions of  
30 their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. And when it was told me how that the  
31 Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee  
32 what they had against him. Farewell. Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by  
33 night to Antipatris. On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle: who, when they came to Cæsarea, and delivered the epistle to the  
34 governor, presented Paul also before him. And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia;  
35 I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.

Fearing for the safety of his prisoner in the face of the plot which had been formed against him, Claudius Lysias determined to send Paul to the Roman procurator Felix, at Cæsarea. The journey to Cæsarea represents the first stage in Paul's progress to Rome.

**23. Make ready, etc.** Lysias took extreme precautions for Paul's protection. A bodyguard of 470 soldiers for a single prisoner seems excessive, though it was undoubtedly necessary in view of the disturbed condition of Jerusalem. The bodyguard was composed of three classes: (a) 200 ordinary soldiers, (b) 70 cavalry, (c) 200 spearmen. It is difficult to decide what exactly the third class represents. The most probable view is that they were light-armed native troops carrying javelins.

**to go to Cæsarea.** Cæsarea was the official residence of the Roman governor; cf. xxi. 8.

**24. Felix the governor.** Felix was the Roman procurator of Judæa. He owed his appointment to the influence of his brother Pallas, the notorious freedman and court favourite of the Emperor Claudius. Jewish and Roman historians unite in describing him as a cruel and profligate ruler. Tacitus, for instance, says of him that "he thought that he could do any evil act with impunity," since he had so much influence behind him at the court. He was finally recalled to Rome in disgrace. For his relations with Herod and his intrigue with Drusilla, see n. on xxiv. 24.

**26. the most excellent governor.** This phrase would be more aptly translated, "to his excellency the governor Felix." The same word is used of Theophilus in i. 1 (see note).

**27. should have been killed.** A misleading

rendering. R.V., "was about to be slain of them."

29. **accused of questions of their law.** Compare the attitude of Gallio at Corinth, xviii. 14.

31. **Antipatris.** A town 42 miles from Jerusalem and 26 from Cæsarea. It had been rebuilt by Herod the Great, and called Antipatris in memory of his father, Antipater.

32. **left the horsemen to go with him.** There was no need for the whole bodyguard to proceed farther, so the 400 soldiers returned, and left the 70 cavalymen to conduct Paul to Cæsarea.

34. **of what province he was.** The question was asked in order that Felix might find out whether Paul's case came under his jurisdiction. The answer satisfied him on the point. Cilicia, like Judæa, was attached to the province of Syria, and Felix therefore was bound to try the case as deputy for his superior officer, the Legate of Syria.

35. **in Herod's judgment hall.** R.V., "in Herod's palace." The Greek word never means "judgment hall." The building in question had probably been erected by Herod as a palace for his own use, but was now used as a residence for the Roman governor.

#### Acts xxiv. 1-26.

### THE TRIAL OF PAUL BEFORE FELIX.

#### I. THE CASE FOR THE PROSECUTION (Acts xxiv. 1-9).

And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul. And when he was

called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy  
 3 deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, we accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with  
 4 all thankfulness. Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us  
 5 of thy clemency a few words. For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all  
 the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect  
 6 of the Nazarenes: who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged  
 7 according to our law. But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our  
 8 hands, commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all  
 9 these things, whereof we accuse him. And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.

After a delay of a few days to enable the accusers to reach Cæsarea, Paul's trial before Felix commenced. The case for the prosecution was presented by an advocate or barrister, as we should term him, named Tertullus. The specific charges made against Paul were as follows: (1) he was a disturber of the peace, "a mover of insurrections among Jews throughout the world;" (2) he was a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes; (3) he had attempted to profane the Temple.

1. **Ananias.** See n. on xxiii. 2.

**a certain orator.** R.V., "with an orator, one Tertullus." The word "orator" is equivalent to our "advocate" or "barrister."

2. **Seeing that by thee.** Tertullus attempts to obtain the favour of Felix by unscrupulous flattery.

**we enjoy great quietness.** R.V., "much peace." This statement is in direct opposition to

facts. The procuratorship of Felix was characterised by an unusual number of outbreaks of lawlessness.

**very worthy deeds are done unto this nation.** R.V., "evils are corrected for this nation." The change is due to an alteration in the Text. The R.V. makes the flattery of Tertullus still more conspicuous. If there was one man who was less worthy than most of his contemporaries to bear the title of Reformer, it was Felix.

**5. a pestilent fellow.** Literally, "a plague," "a pestilence."

**a mover of sedition.** R.V., "a mover of insurrections." This charge was very skilfully entered on the indictment. The word "insurrection" was certain to frighten Felix, and would therefore lead him to condemn Paul at once.

**a ringleader . . . of the Nazarenes.** Felix would probably be familiar with the action of his predecessor Pilate in allowing Jesus to be crucified. Tertullus hints that if he wished to follow precedent, he would take the same course with Paul.

**6. hath gone about to profane.** R.V., "who moreover assayed to profane the temple." Cf. xxi. 28, 29.

6-8. The words from the latter part of ver. 6, beginning with the phrase, "and would have judged," down to the end of the first clause in ver. 8, "commanding his accusers to come unto thee," are omitted in the best MSS. and the R.V.

**8. by examining of whom.** In the A.V. the antecedent to "whom" is "the accusers." It is clear, however, from the Greek that the pronoun refers to Paul. The mistake of the A.V. is due to the insertion of the omitted clauses in vers. 6-8. The R.V. makes the meaning of the verse clear by

translating, "from whom thou wilt be able, by examining him thyself, to take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him."

## THE TRIAL OF PAUL BEFORE FELIX—(*continued*).

### II. PAUL'S DEFENCE (Acts xxiv. 10-21).

10 Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more  
11 cheerfully answer for myself: because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went  
12 up to Jerusalem for to worship. And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city:  
13 neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse  
14 me. But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in  
15 the prophets: and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of  
16 the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of  
17 offence toward God, and toward men. Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.  
18 Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in  
19 the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult. Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they  
20 had ought against me. Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before  
21 the council, except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.



After Tertullus had set forth the case for the prosecution, Felix called upon Paul to defend himself. Paul in his speech rebutted the charges which had been made against him by (1) giving a brief history of the circumstances connected with his visit to Jerusalem; (2) commenting on the absence of any evidence in support of the accusations; (3) showing that his real accusers—the Jews from Asia—had not been summoned to Cæsarea to give evidence; (4) stating that his intentions in coming to Jerusalem had been absolutely peaceful, and that he himself was in no way responsible for the tumult.

**10. Forasmuch as I know.** The quiet dignity and truthfulness of Paul's opening words compare favourably with the fulsome and false flattery of Tertullus.

**of many years.** Felix had probably been appointed in 52, and so had held office for four or five years. It is not unlikely, too, that before his own appointment he may have been associated with his predecessor Cumanus in the government of Judæa.

**11. there are yet but twelve days.** R.V., "it is not more than twelve days since I went up," etc. Paul is calling attention to the brevity of his visit to Jerusalem in order to show that the time was quite inadequate for the offences mentioned in the indictment.

**14. after the way which they call heresy.** R.V., "after the Way which they call a sect." Observe the two important changes: (a) "way" is spelt with a capital W, to indicate that it was a title of the Christian religion (see n. on ix. 2); (b) the term "sect" is substituted for "heresy." The Greek word is the same as that employed in ver. 5 in the phrase "the sect of the Nazarenes."

**15. a hope . . . a resurrection of the just and the unjust.** Paul's words seem to imply that a belief in the resurrection and in future reward and punishment was unanimously accepted by the Jews. This was not the case exactly. The Sadducees denied the resurrection altogether. A large number of Jews, too, who believed in the resurrection of the righteous, denied altogether the possibility of a resurrection of the wicked.

**16. herein do I exercise myself.** "In this faith, of which I have spoken," says Paul, "I train myself that I may have," etc. Paul often in his Epistles insists on the discipline of the Christian life: cf. 1 Cor. ix. 24-27; Phil. ii. 12-13.

**a conscience.** See n. on xxiii. 1.

**17. after many years.** The length of the interval implied by this phrase depends upon the interpretation of xviii. 22 (see note). If Paul paid a visit to Jerusalem before the commencement of the third missionary tour, the interval of absence was about four years; but if Paul's previous visit to Jerusalem is that recorded in chap. xv. the interval must have extended over seven years.

**I came to bring alms.** A collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem is often alluded to in the Epistles (cf. Rom. xv. 26; 1 Cor. xvi. 1-4; 2 Cor. viii. 4), and it was probably this collection that Paul brought with him to Jerusalem.

**18. certain Jews from Asia.** Cf. xxi. 27. The R.V. arranges the clauses differently: "Amidst which they found me purified in the temple, with no crowd nor yet with tumult; but there were certain Jews from Asia," etc.

**purified in the temple.** See n. on xxi. 23.

**21. for this one voice, etc.** See xxiii. 6.

## Acts xxiv. 22-27.

## PAUL AND FELIX.

22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the  
23 uttermost of your matter. And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come  
24 unto him. And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul,  
25 and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for  
26 thee. He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for  
27 him the oftener, and communed with him. But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

Felix, after hearing the arguments of both parties, adjourned the case on the pretext that in the absence of Claudius Lysias the evidence was incomplete. As a matter of fact, however, Felix himself was in a dilemma. He knew enough of the history of the Christian movement to be able to see that there was no real case against Paul. Moreover, there can be little doubt that there was something about Paul which fascinated him. Profligate and licentious though he was, Paul's moral earnestness appealed to him. Yet Felix dared not follow his own convictions and acquit the prisoner. He was far too cowardly to face the storm of Jewish hatred which would be aroused if

the case were dismissed. So he let "I dare not" wait upon "I would," and kept Paul a prisoner at Cæsarea for two years, granting him occasional interviews, and showing a readiness to listen to, though not to follow, his teaching.

**22. having more perfect knowledge of that way.** R.V., "having more exact knowledge concerning the Way." See n. on ver. 14.

**know the uttermost.** R.V., "I will determine your matter."

**23. let him have liberty.** R.V., "should have indulgence." Paul was allowed access to his friends, who were permitted to provide him with food, books, writing materials, etc. This was a very considerable concession, since Paul had many friends in Cæsarea—notably, of course, Philip the Evangelist.

**24. with his wife Drusilla.** The story of the relations between Felix and Drusilla is one of the most disgraceful episodes of the time. Drusilla was the youngest daughter of Agrippa I., and sister of the Bernice who is mentioned in xxv. 13. She had been married to Azizus, King of Emesa, but she was induced by Felix to leave her husband and become his wife. Felix himself had been married twice before, and has the unenviable notoriety of having been "the husband of three queens." Some scholars think that the intrigue took place at this time, and is referred to in the phrase "when Felix came with his wife;" but the chronological data are so uncertain that it is impossible to prove or disprove the conjecture. The hypothesis certainly adds vividness to the scene.

**25. And as he reasoned, etc.** In speaking to Gentiles, Paul usually dwelt upon that aspect of the gospel which they would be most likely to

appreciate (compare the speech at Athens), viz., its ethical teaching and its promise of a future life. The special circumstances connected with the career of Felix must, however, have added dramatic effect to his words in the present case. Righteousness! How strangely the words of Paul must have sounded in the ears of the man who thought that "he could do any evil act with impunity"! Temperance! (the word is used with its widest meaning, in the sense of self-control). How Felix, fresh from his intrigue with Drusilla, must have writhed under the lash of Paul's denunciation! Judgment to come! What a sting there must have been in Paul's language for Felix, who felt himself absolutely secure as long as his brother Pallas was in power at Rome! The judge and the prisoner had changed places. Paul sat on the bench, Felix stood at the bar. The only parallel is to be found in the equally dramatic scene in which John the Baptist denounced the sin of Herod Antipas (Matt. xiv. 1-12).

**Felix trembled.** R.V., "was terrified." Paul's home thrusts had touched his conscience and made him uneasy, though he was too weak to break away from his sin.

**26. He hoped that money would be given.** A Roman governor, if he were unscrupulous, had many opportunities of making money by illegitimate means, and Felix evidently, in addition to his other crimes, was guilty of corruption.

**27. Porcius Festus came.** Felix was recalled to Rome in disgrace. His successor, Festus, was a finer type of man, and his administration was not disgraced by the crimes which characterised the rule of Felix. The date at which the change of



governors took place cannot, unfortunately, be settled. Some authorities place it as early as 55, others as late as 61. The uncertainty affects the whole chronology of Acts and Paul's life.

Acts xxv. 1-12.

THE TRIAL BEFORE FESTUS, AND  
PAUL'S APPEAL TO CÆSAR.

Now when Festus was come into the province, after three  
2 days he ascended from Cæsarea to Jerusalem. Then the  
high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against  
3 Paul, and besought him, and desired favour against him,  
that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in  
4 the way to kill him. But Festus answered, that Paul  
should be kept at Cæsarea, and that he himself would  
5 depart shortly thither. Let them therefore, said he, which  
among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this  
6 man, if there be any wickedness in him. And when he  
had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down  
unto Cæsarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment  
7 seat commanded Paul to be brought. And when he was  
come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood  
round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against  
8 Paul, which they could not prove. While he answered for  
himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither  
against the temple, nor yet against Cæsar, have I offended  
9 any thing at all. But Festus, willing to do the Jews a  
pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to  
Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?  
10 Then said Paul, I stand at Cæsar's judgment seat, where I  
ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as  
11 thou very well knowest. For if I be an offender, or have  
committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die:



but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto  
 12 Cæsar. Then Festus, when he had conferred with the  
 ° council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? unto  
 Cæsar shalt thou go.

The prompt action of Festus stands out in striking contrast to the dilatoriness of Felix, who had kept Paul under surveillance at Cæsarea for two years without attempting to settle the matter. The case passes rapidly through the following stages: (1) Upon the occasion of Festus' visit to Jerusalem, immediately after taking office, the Jews make an appeal to him to send Paul back to Jerusalem. This request Festus refuses to grant, but arranges that the trial shall take place immediately at Cæsarea. (2) The trial takes place. The accusers fail to prove their indictment. (3) Festus, anxious to shift the responsibility on to other shoulders, asks Paul whether he is willing to go to Jerusalem and stand a trial before the Council. Paul refuses, and exercises his right of appeal to the Emperor.

2. **Then the high priest, etc.** R.V., "And the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews." Ver. 15 shows that the phrase "principal men" is equivalent to "elders."

4. **should be kept at Cæsarea.** This translation scarcely gives the force of the original, which states that "Paul was kept in charge at Cæsarea."

5. **which amongst you are able.** The ambiguity of this expression is removed by the translation of the R.V., "Let them which are of power among you."

6. **more than ten days.** The best MSS. read, "not more than eight or ten days."

**7. many and grievous complaints.** In addition to the former charges of (1) teaching contrary to the Law, (2) profaning the Temple, the Jews seem to have tried to strengthen their case by accusing Paul of high treason against Cæsar (compare Paul's reply in ver. 8).

**10. I stand at Cæsar's judgment seat.** Paul claims the right, as a Roman citizen, of being tried before a Roman tribunal, and declines to return to Jerusalem.

**11. I appeal unto Cæsar.** Every Roman citizen had the right, in the last resort, of carrying his case to Rome and placing it before the Emperor as the final court of appeal.

**12. conferred with the council.** *I.e.*, with the chief members of his staff, who acted as assessors in the Procurator's Court.

# Acts xxv. 13-22.

## FESTUS CONSULTS KING AGRIPPA.

13 And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto  
 14 Cæsarea to salute Festus. And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix:  
 15 about whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have  
 16 judgment against him. To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the  
 17 crime laid against him. Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I sat on the

judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought  
 18 forth. Against whom when the accusers stood up, they  
 brought none accusation of such things as I supposed:  
 19 but had certain questions against him of their own super-  
 stition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul  
 20 affirmed to be alive. And because I doubted of such  
 manner of questions, I asked him whether he would go to  
 21 Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters. But  
 when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing  
 of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send  
 22 him to Cæsar. Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would  
 also hear the man myself. To-morrow, said he, thou  
 shalt hear him.

An opportune visit of King Agrippa II. to Cæsarea afforded Festus an opportunity of consulting the highest Jewish authority with regard to the case of Paul. Festus laid the whole matter before Agrippa, and the king expressed a desire to see and hear Paul.

**13. Agrippa.** Herod Agrippa II. was the son and successor of Herod Agrippa I. (see introductory note to chap.\*xii. and n. on xii. 1). He was only seventeen years old when his father died in 44 A.D., and pressure was brought upon the Emperor Claudius to refuse him the throne. The whole of Palestine, therefore, passed under direct Roman government for the first time. Later on, however, Agrippa received the title of King, and had allotted to him certain districts on the N.E. of Palestine (Gaulonitis and Trachonitis). Subsequently, too, he also received certain cities of Galilee. His authority, however, was never more than a mere shadow of that possessed by his father.

**Bernice.** A daughter of Agrippa I., and consequently sister of Agrippa II. and Drusilla. The

worst rumours are found both in Jewish and Roman historians as to the immoral relations which existed between Bernice and her brother. She had previously been married to Herod of Chalcis. She has been described as a "Jewish Cleopatra on a small scale." Her later life was full of low intrigues, in which the Emperor Titus was the most prominent associate.

15. **desiring to have judgment.** R.V., "asking for sentence against him."

16. **to deliver any man to die.** R.V. omits the last two words, and translates, "to give up any man."

19. **of their own superstition.** R.V., "religion." The Greek word may mean either "religion" or "superstition," but it is scarcely likely that Festus would have described the Jewish religion as a superstition to Agrippa.

20. **because I doubted of such manner,** etc. The meaning of this expression is made clear by the R.V., "And I, being perplexed how to inquire concerning these things, asked," etc.

21. **unto the hearing of Augustus.** "Augustus" is the official title borne by the Roman Emperor. R.V., "for the decision of the emperor."

# Acts xxv. 23-xxvi. 32.

## PAUL BEFORE KING AGRIPPA.

### I. FESTUS OPENS THE COURT (xxv. 23-27).

23 And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at

24 Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth. And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying that he ought not to live  
 25 any longer. But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed  
 26 to Augustus, I have determined to send him. Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might  
 27 have somewhat to write. For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him.

In response to Agrippa's request, Festus held a special meeting of the Court to re-examine Paul and hear his defence. The trial was quite informal. The Court could not override Paul's appeal to Rome. It was held in order to gratify Agrippa's curiosity rather than to serve the interests of justice, though Festus made the excuse that its purpose was to obtain the necessary facts for his official report to the Emperor.

**23. with great pomp.** A love of display was one of the most marked characteristics of the Herodian family, and reached its climax in Agrippa and Bernice.

**24. have dealt with me.** R.V., "made suit to me."

**and also here.** The Jews in Jerusalem had evidently stirred up their kinsmen in Cæsarea, thinking no doubt that the leading citizens in the seat of Roman government would be able to influence the mind of Festus against Paul.

**25. appealed to Augustus.** See n. on ver. 11.

26. Of whom I have nothing certain to write. Paul's case had obviously baffled Festus, as it had baffled other Roman administrators. No charge had been brought which was actionable under Roman law, yet so much popular prejudice had been aroused that it was hardly possible to take what seemed to be the clear course and acquit the prisoner. Hence Festus felt the utmost difficulty in stating the grounds of Paul's appeal in a way which would be intelligible at Rome.

#### PAUL BEFORE KING AGRIPPA—(*continued*).

##### II. PAUL'S DEFENCE (Acts xxvi. 1-23).

Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand,  
2 and answered for himself: I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the  
3 Jews: especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: where-  
4 fore I beseech thee to hear me patiently. My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own  
5 nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.  
6 And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the  
7 promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king  
8 Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise



9 the dead? I verily thought with myself, that I ought to  
do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of  
10 Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and  
many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received  
authority from the chief priests; and when they were put  
11 to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished  
them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to  
blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I  
12 persecuted them even unto strange cities. Whereupon as  
I went to Damascus with authority and commission from  
13 the chief priests, at midday, O king, I saw in the way a  
light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining  
round about me and them which journeyed with me.  
14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice  
speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul,  
Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick  
15 against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord?  
16 And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But  
rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto  
thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a  
witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of  
17 those things in the which I will appear unto thee; de-  
livering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto  
18 whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn  
them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan  
unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and  
inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that  
19 is in me. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not dis-  
20 obedient unto the heavenly vision: but shewed first unto  
them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all  
the coasts of Judæa, and then to the Gentiles, that they  
should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for  
21 repentance. For these causes the Jews caught me in the  
22 temple, and went about to kill me. Having therefore  
obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing  
both to small and great, saying none other things than  
those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

23 that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

The defence which Paul made before King Agrippa consisted mainly in a *résumé* of his own personal history and religious experience. Paul points out that at one time he himself shared the views which were held by his opponents, and thought "that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." He then proceeds to show how his attitude had been completely changed by the revelation which came to him on the road to Damascus, recounting the story of his conversion. This is the third account of Paul's conversion which is given in the Acts, the other two being in chaps. ix. and xxii. There are some important points of difference between the account here and that which Paul gives in chap. xxii., the most striking perhaps being the fact that here, in vers. 16-18, Paul ascribes to Christ the message which in xxii. 14 he puts into the mouth of Ananias.

2. **I think myself happy.** Paul recognises that in speaking before Agrippa he is defending himself before one who is acquainted with Jewish thought and customs, and arguments which would be quite unintelligible to the mind of a Roman procurator will carry weight with Agrippa. Paul's difficulty with Festus had been, that Festus lived in one world and he himself lived in quite another. Festus could not appreciate the problems and aspirations of the Jews. Agrippa, being a Jew himself, would be able at any rate to understand Paul's position.

4. **among mine own nation at Jerusalem.**

The R.V. makes an important alteration here by inserting the word "and" before "at Jerusalem." The A.V. implies that Paul lived at Jerusalem from his earliest youth. In the R.V., on the other hand, the phrase "among my own nation" refers to the Jews at Tarsus. With the A.V., we have to suppose that Paul was brought to Jerusalem in infancy. The R.V. shows that his youth was spent at Tarsus.

**5. most straitest sect.** The double superlative here is unwarranted by the Greek. R.V. therefore omits "most." The Pharisees were the most punctilious and exacting school of thought amongst the Jews.

**6. I stand and am judged.** "The real ground of opposition to me," says Paul, "is that I am a believer in the promises of the prophets. I am convinced that the prophets spoke the truth when they foretold the advent of a Messiah, and I believe that their predictions have been realised in Jesus of Nazareth."

**7. our twelve tribes.** The Jews constantly spoke of themselves as "the twelve tribes": cf. Jas. i. 1; 1 Pet. i. 1.

**I am accused of the Jews.** The phrase "of the Jews" is emphatic in this verse. "The Jews," argues Paul, "are the last people in the world who ought to attack me for believing in the prophets, and yet they are the first to bring the accusation against me."

**10. Which things I also did in Jerusalem.** This statement is a proof that Paul was something more than an interested spectator of the persecution. He was the organising genius of the attack made upon the Christians. See ix. 2, xxii. 4.

**when they were put to death.** There were other martyrdoms besides that of Stephen—unless Paul is here exaggerating his guilt.

**I gave my vote against them.** These words indicate that Paul was himself a member of the Council or Sanhedrin of the Jews at Jerusalem, and gave his vote in favour of the persecution. Some scholars, however, think that the expression is used figuratively, and simply denotes Paul's sympathy with the persecution. The Greek word, however, is too definite and precise to admit of this explanation.

11. See notes on ix. 1 and xxii. 4.

**compelled them to blaspheme.** R.V., "I strove to make them blaspheme." The Greek phrase does not indicate that Paul's efforts succeeded.

12, 13. See notes on ix. 3-5 and xxii. 6-8.

14. **it is hard for thee to kick,** etc. This is the only one of the three accounts where the best MSS. give these words. In ix. 5 they are a later insertion. The phrase implies that Paul had for some time been struggling against the goads. The Divine intervention at Damascus does not represent an isolated event in Paul's experience. It is rather the culminating point in God's dealings with him. God had been calling Saul in various ways, but Saul had hitherto been deaf to His voice. The energy with which he had thrown himself into the work of persecution probably only represents a last effort to stifle conscience. We gain some indication as to the character of the goads in the great autobiographical passage in Rom. vii. 7-25. In the moral crisis of his life Paul found the Jewish Law incapable of satisfying the deepest needs of his soul. It convinced him of sin, it held up an ideal,

but it failed to supply the dynamic necessary for conquest and attainment. It left him in the anguish of despair, crying out in agony of soul, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" There can be little doubt that this moral struggle prepared the way for his conversion.

16. **for I have appeared unto thee.** The commission, which is represented here as having been given to Paul by Christ, in the other two accounts is put into the mouth of Ananias. Paul is probably modifying the story in the present passage in the interests of his hearers, but this should warn us against laying too much stress on the details given in any of the accounts.

18. The phrases used in this verse are characteristic of Paul's own literary style. It is quite clear that he is describing the vision in his own words, and we must not therefore regard the language as representing the *verba ipsissima* of a Divine communication.

20. Here again there is an abbreviation. Between Paul's work at Damascus and his visit to Jerusalem there is an interval of three years; see n. on ix. 23.

**throughout all the coasts of Judæa.** This statement has no support in the other narratives, and seems to be in direct contradiction to Gal. i. 22, where Paul says, "I was unknown by face to the churches of Judæa." Many scholars regard the words as a later interpolation, and the variations in the MSS. afford some slight support to the theory.

23. The R.V. makes several important changes in this verse: "how that the Christ must suffer, and how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light," etc. The meaning is: "The prophets foretold that the Messiah would be a

sufferer, and would prove by the fact that he rose from the dead that he was qualified to bring light to the world." For the importance that Paul attached to the Resurrection as proving the Divine mission of Christ, compare the speech at Antioch in Pisidia (chap. xiii. ; see especially n. on xiii. 33).

### PAUL BEFORE KING AGRIPPA—(*continued*).

#### III. THE EFFECT OF PAUL'S DEFENCE (Acts xxvi. 24-32).

24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth  
25 make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.  
26 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a  
27 corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I  
28 know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul,  
29 Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such  
30 as I am, except these bonds. And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice,  
31 and they that sat with them: and when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man  
32 doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.

Paul's defence produced different effects on the minds of Festus and Agrippa. Festus regarded him as mad. There was very little in his address



that the Procurator could understand. Paul seemed to him an eccentric fanatic talking nonsense. Agrippa, on the other hand, understood Paul, and seems to have been impressed by his moral earnestness. Both agreed, however, that he was no criminal, and might have been acquitted but for his appeal to Cæsar.

**24. much learning doth make thee mad.** R.V., "thy much learning doth turn thee to madness." Festus, who seems to have been a good example of the cool, level-headed, practical Roman, thought that Paul's learning had destroyed his common sense and that religious excitement had unhinged his mind.

26. Paul turns from Festus to Agrippa, and appeals to the latter's knowledge of the facts. He feels that it is hopeless to attempt to make Festus believe in the Resurrection of Christ. But Agrippa is different. He was acquainted with what had happened in Jerusalem. He must have heard the story of Christ's Crucifixion and Resurrection. He believed, too, in the prophets, and they were on Paul's side.

**28. Almost thou persuadest me, etc.** It is not easy to determine the exact force and significance of Agrippa's remark. One thing, however, is quite clear: the translation of the A.V. is absolutely wrong. The words rendered "almost" cannot have that meaning, but must be translated "with little trouble." The best MSS., too, read "to make," instead of "to become," a Christian. The R.V. translates, "With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian," and this is probably the most accurate interpretation of the Text. The import of the passage seems to be as

follows:—Paul is attempting to cross-examine Agrippa and extract an admission from him which would have been damaging to his opponent. “Do you believe the prophets?” he asks. “I know you do.” If Agrippa had assented, Paul would have at once proceeded to build up an argument to prove that belief in the prophets involved the acceptance of Jesus as Messiah. Agrippa saw through the design, and at once parried the question and stopped the argument. “You are making a mistake,” he says to Paul, “in supposing that it will only need a little persuasion to make me a Christian. I am not to be convinced by any ‘short argument’ of yours.”

29. **both almost and altogether.** The change in the translation of ver. 28 necessitates an alteration here. The R.V. renders, “that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but all that hear me this day, might become such as I am.” “Whether by little persuasion or much,” says Paul, “whether by short argument or by long, I would to God that I could convince you and all my hearers of the truth of my belief.”

30. **when he had thus spoken.** This phrase is omitted in the R.V.

32. **This man might have been set at liberty.** Agrippa, looking at the matter from the Jewish standpoint, confirms the opinion of the Roman procurator that from a legal point of view there was no case against Paul. Roman and Jewish law, therefore, were at one in declaring Paul’s innocence.

Acts xxvii. 1-xxviii. 16.

## PAUL'S VOYAGE TO ROME.

## I. THE FIRST STAGE OF THE VOYAGE (Acts xxvii. 1-8).

And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one  
 2 named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band. And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus, a Macedonian  
 3 of Thessalonica, being with us. And the next day we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh him-  
 4 self. And when we had launched from thence, we sailed  
 5 under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia  
 6 we came to Myra, a city of Lycia. And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and  
 7 he put us therein. And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over against  
 8 Salmone; and, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The fair havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.

Under the escort of a centurion named Julius, Paul in company with some other prisoners commenced his eventful voyage to Rome on a coasting vessel which conveyed the travellers from Cæsarea to Myra. At Myra the party changed vessels and took a ship which was bound for Italy. With some difficulty they reached Fair Havens, in the south of Crete.

1. of Augustus' band. R.V., "of the Augustan band." The exact meaning of the phrase "Augustan band" is difficult to determine. It may have been

a cohort which had received the title "Augustan" or "Imperial" for some achievement in war. Sir W. Ramsay thinks that the name is a popular title for a particular cohort specially detached for Imperial service.

2. **a ship of Adramyttium.** Probably a coasting vessel, trading between Adramyttium and Cæsarea. Adramyttium was a seaport in Mysia, opposite to the island of Lesbos. The vessel was returning home for the winter.

**Aristarchus.** See n. on xix. 29. Cp. xx. 4.

3. **Sidon.** See n. on xi. 20.

**courteously entreated Paul.** R.V., "treated Paul kindly."

4. **we sailed under Cyprus.** R.V., "we sailed under the lee of Cyprus," *i.e.*, between Cyprus and the mainland, to escape the force of the wind.

5. **sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia.** Literally, as in the R.V., "the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia." For Cilicia see vi. 9, and for Pamphylia xiii. 13.

**Myra.** A port on the south of Lycia, at the mouth of the river Andriacus.

6. **found a ship.** At Myra the party had what seemed to be the good fortune to find a vessel, probably a corn-ship, from Alexandria bound direct for Italy. Otherwise they would have been bound to continue the coasting voyage and join the Via Egnatia, in the north of Greece, whence they could proceed overland to Rome.

7. **Cnidus.** The extreme south-west point of Asia Minor. Owing to the wind, the ship had been compelled to hug the coast from Myra to Cnidus, instead of steering a straight course for Cythera, the island on the south of Greece.

**we sailed under Crete.** R.V., "under the lee of Crete." The direct course would have been considerably north of Crete. The unfavourable wind, however, compelled the ship to sail round Crete.

**Salmone.** The cape at the N.E. extremity of Crete.

**8. and hardly passing it.** R.V., "with difficulty coasting along it."

**Fair Havens.** A harbour on the south of Crete, four or five miles east of Cape Matala.

**Lasea.** Ruins of a city have been discovered four miles east of Fair Havens, which are generally identified with Lasea. The city is otherwise completely unknown to us.

## PAUL'S VOYAGE TO ROME—(*continued*).

### II. THE STORM AT SEA (Acts xxvii. 9–26).

9 Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past,  
 10 Paul admonished them, and said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of  
 11 our lives. Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things  
 12 which were spoken by Paul. And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete,  
 13 and lieth toward the south west and north west. And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close

14 by Crete. But not long after there arose against it a  
15 tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon. And when the  
ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we  
16 let her drive. And running under a certain island which  
is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat :  
17 which when they had taken up, they used helps, under-  
girding the ship ; and, fearing lest they should fall into the  
18 quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven. And we  
being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they  
19 lightened the ship ; and the third day we cast out with  
20 our own hands the tackling of the ship. And when  
neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small  
tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was  
21 then taken away. But after long abstinence Paul stood  
forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have  
hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and  
22 to have gained this harm and loss. And now I exhort you  
to be of good cheer ; for there shall be no loss of any man's  
23 life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me  
this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I  
24 serve, saying, Fear not, Paul ; thou must be brought  
before Cæsar : and, lo, God hath given thee all them that  
25 sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer : for I  
26 believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. How-  
beit we must be cast upon a certain island.

The ship was delayed for some time at Fair Havens by unfavourable winds, and Paul advised the centurion to let the prisoners remain there till the spring. The captain was anxious, however, to proceed a little farther. There was no chance now of getting to Italy before winter set in, but he proposed to make for the harbour of Phœnix, in the S.W. of Crete. The centurion was persuaded to accompany the ship to its winter quarters. Soon after starting a terrible storm arose, and the ship



was driven out of its course. The storm lasted for the greater part of a fortnight. The ship was in the gravest peril, and it became necessary to jettison the cargo. Paul constantly encouraged the sailors, assuring them that they would get safely to land without the loss of a single life.

**9. much time was spent.** *I.e.*, in waiting for a favourable wind.

**the fast was . . . past.** The fast is the Day of Atonement, which was kept on the tenth of Tisri (towards the end of September or the beginning of October). Navigation in ancient times ceased about this date for the winter.

**12. toward the south west and north west.** R.V., "looking north-east and south-east." The ground upon which the change is made is as follows: The original reads, "looking down the south-west wind and down the north-west wind." To "look down a wind" is to look in the direction towards which it blows. A south-west wind blows in a north-easterly direction, and a north-west wind in a south-easterly. Hence the change. If the R.V. is right, Phœnice (R.V., "Phœnix") must be identified with the modern Lutro. Many scholars, however, think that the A.V. is more correct, and that the original Greek does not mean "looking down in the direction of the wind," but facing the wind. In this case, the place indicated must be identified with the modern Phineka. The similarity in the names is a strong argument in favour of this view.

**13. loosing thence.** *I.e.*, from Fair Havens.

**close by Crete.** R.V., "sailed along Crete, close in shore."

**14. Euroclydon.** R.V., "Euraquilo." The name given to the north-east wind. "Euroclydon"

may possibly be a popular corruption for the more accurate "Euraquilo."

16. **running under a certain island.** R.V., "running under the lee of a certain island."

**Clauda.** R.V., "Cauda." A small island S.W. of Crete.

**to come by the boat.** R.V., "to secure the boat." The small boat was towed from the stern of the ship. Owing to the severity of the storm, it was in danger of being washed away.

17. **they used helps.** *I.e.*, strong cables which were used to "undergird" the ship. They were passed round the hull and tied firmly to prevent the timbers from parting.

**should fall into the quicksands.** R.V., "be cast upon the Syrtis." "Syrtis" is the name given to the quicksands on the N.E. of Africa.

**strake sail.** R.V., "lowered the gear."

18. **they lightened the ship.** R.V., "they began to throw the freight overboard."

19. **we cast out.** The best MSS. read, "they cast out."

**the tackling.** The furniture and fittings of the vessel—all the tackle not actually in use at the time.

23. **the angel of God.** R.V., "an angel of God." Though we need not press this phrase, it is certain that Paul must have received a Divine assurance which convinced him that the storm would not be attended with loss of life.

THE VOYAGE TO ROME—(*continued*).

## III. THE SHIPWRECK (Acts xxvii. 27–44).

27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were  
driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen  
28 deemed that they drew near to some country; and  
sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they  
had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it  
29 fifteen fathoms. Then fearing lest we should have fallen  
upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and  
30 wished for the day. And as the shipmen were about to  
flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into  
the sea, under colour as though they would have cast  
31 anchors out of the foreship, Paul said to the centurion  
and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye  
32 cannot be saved. Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the  
33 boat, and let her fall off. And while the day was coming  
on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day  
is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued  
34 fasting, having taken nothing. Wherefore I pray you  
to take some meat; for this is for your health: for there  
35 shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you. And  
when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks  
to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken  
36 it, he began to eat. Then were they all of good cheer,  
37 and they also took some meat. And we were in all in  
38 the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls. And  
when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and  
39 cast out the wheat into the sea. And when it was day,  
they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain  
creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if  
40 it were possible, to thrust in the ship. And when they  
had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto  
the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoised up the  
41 mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore. And

falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground : and the fore part stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence  
 42 of the waves. And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.  
 43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose ; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to  
 44 land : and the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.

On the fourteenth night of the voyage there were signs that the ship was approaching land. The vessel was "hove to," and the sailors made an attempt to escape in the small boat. Their plan, however, was thwarted by the vigilance of Paul. The narrative throws a brilliant light on the commanding personality of the Apostle. Prisoner though he was, he virtually assumed the command of the ship, and it was mainly due to his foresight that the safety of the passengers was assured. When morning came, the ship was run ashore. It was smashed in the process, but all who were on board got safely to land.

27. **up and down in Adria.** R.V., "in the sea of Adria." The "Sea of Adria" is the name given to that part of the Mediterranean which lay between Italy, Greece, and Africa.

29. **lest we should have fallen upon rocks.** R.V., "should be cast ashore on rocky ground."

30. **as the shipmen were about to flee.** R.V., "as the sailors were seeking to flee."

33. **Paul besought them,** etc. A fine illustration of Paul's practical common sense. The Divine promise did not exonerate the sailors from taking

all due precaution and using all human means to ensure safety. Paul urges them to take food, lest when the critical moment arrived they should be too weak and enfeebled to grasp the opportunity.

**37. two hundred threescore,** etc. The figure here given—276—seems far too large for an ancient merchant-ship. Some MSS. put the number at 76—a much more reasonable estimate.

**39.** The R.V. contains some important points of difference in its rendering of this verse: “but they perceived a certain bay with a beach, and they took counsel whether they could drive the ship upon it.”

**40. they committed themselves unto the sea.** A mistranslation. The R.V. rightly renders, “And casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea.”

**loosed the rudder bands.** The rudder of an ancient ship consisted of a large flat oar which was either fastened to or passed through an aperture in the stern. In large vessels there were two rudders, as in the present case, attached to both sides of the stern. When the vessel had cast anchor, the rudders were raised out of the water and lashed to the stern. It was necessary, therefore, to untie the ropes and let them down into the water, before they could steer again.

**the mainsail.** The Greek word used here means not “mainsail” but “foresail,” so R.V.

**41. a place where two seas met.** The scene of the shipwreck is generally located in what is now called “St. Paul’s Bay,” which is situated on the N.W. of Valetta, the capital of Malta. On the west of the bay there is a small island, called Salmonetta, separated from the mainland by a

narrow channel. It is generally assumed that this channel is "the meeting of the two seas" mentioned here.

the hinder part was broken. R.V., "the stern began to break up by the violence of the waves."

### THE VOYAGE TO ROME—(*continued*).

#### IV. PAUL AT MALTA (Acts xxviii. 1-10).

And when they were escaped, then they knew that the  
 2 island was called Melita. And the barbarous people  
 shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and  
 received us every one, because of the present rain, and  
 3 because of the cold. And when Paul had gathered a  
 bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came  
 4 a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand. And  
 when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his  
 hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a  
 murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet venge-  
 5 ance suffereth not to live. And he shook off the beast into  
 6 the fire, and felt no harm. Howbeit they looked when he  
 should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but  
 after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm  
 come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he  
 7 was a god. In the same quarters were possessions of the  
 chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who  
 8 received us, and lodged us three days courteously. And  
 it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a  
 fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and  
 9 prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. So  
 when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the  
 10 island, came, and were healed: who also honoured us  
 with many honours; and when we departed, they laded  
 us with such things as were necessary.



The shipwrecked company were kindly received by the natives of Malta, who ministered to their needs. The governor of the island, Publius, gave them food and lodging for three days, and made arrangements for them to spend the winter in Malta. The narrative contains two apparently miraculous incidents: (1) Paul's escape from the viper (vers. 4-6); (2) the healing of Publius' father (ver. 8).

**1. was called Melita.** The ancient equivalent for the modern Malta.

**2. the barbarous people.** The Greeks bestowed the name "barbarian" upon all who did not use the Greek language. The phrase used here does not therefore indicate that the inhabitants of Malta were savages. It simply refers to the fact that their language was Phœnician, and not Greek.

**3. out of the heat.** R.V., "by reason of the heat."

**4. the venomous beast.** There is no word for "venomous" in the original. Its addition is an unwarranted attempt on the part of the translators to heighten the effect of the story.

**vengeance suffereth not to live.** R.V., more correctly, "Justice hath not suffered to live." The abstract term is here personified.

**6.** The R.V. is a truer rendering of the Greek, and makes better English: "But they expected that he would have swollen, or fallen down dead."

**said he was a god.** Compare the action of the people of Lystra (xiv. 11).

**7. In the same quarters.** R.V., "in the neighbourhood of that place."

**chief man of the island.** Another illustration

of the accuracy of Luke. Inscriptions which have been discovered in Malta prove that the governor of the island bore the title of "chief man."

8. The R.V. renders "sick of fever and dysentery." The technical terms used to describe the illness imply that the writer of Acts was acquainted with medicine. See iii. 7.

10. **honours.** Tokens of respect—gifts of money and other presents over and above the necessities mentioned in the next clause.

### THE VOYAGE TO ROME—(*continued*).

#### V. THE JOURNEY FROM MALTA TO ROME (Acts xxviii. 11-16).

11 And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was  
12 Castor and Pollux. And landing at Syracuse, we tarried  
13 there three days. And from thence we fetched a compass,  
and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind  
14 blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli: where we  
found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven  
15 days: and so we went toward Rome. And from thence,  
when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far  
as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul  
16 saw, he thanked God, and took courage. And when  
we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners  
to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell  
by himself with a soldier that kept him.

After remaining three months in Malta, the prisoners were embarked on an Alexandrian ship, and sailed for Italy. They touched at Syracuse and Rhegium, and finally landed at Puteoli, from

which port they journeyed by road to Rome—a distance of 140 miles. The Christians of the Roman Church hearing of Paul's arrival, sent some of their number to Appii forum (a distance of 40 miles from Rome) to welcome the Apostle and conduct him to the city.

**11. after three months.** Probably about February, when navigation commenced again after the winter.

**whose sign was Castor and Pollux.** R.V., "whose sign was The Twin Brothers." The name of the ship was "The Twin Brothers": the A.V. is an explanation rather than a translation of the Greek. "The Twin Brothers" were Castor and Pollux, the two sons of Jupiter, who afterwards gave their names to the famous constellation, and were regarded as the tutelary deities of sailors.

**12. landing ("R.V. touching") at Syracuse.** Syracuse was one of the principal towns in Sicily, and was situated on the eastern coast of the island. It was a port of call for corn-ships trading between Rome and Alexandria.

**13. we fet a compass.** R.V., "made a circuit;" *i.e.*, took a circuitous route because the wind was unfavourable. There is another reading in the original which has strong support and is preferred by many scholars: "we cast loose," *i.e.*, weighed anchor. The word "fet" in the A.V. is an Old English contraction for "fetched."

**Rhegium.** The modern Reggio, situated at the southern point of Italy, on the Straits of Messina.

**Puteoli.** The port of Rome, situated on the north of the Bay of Naples. The distance between Rhegium and Puteoli was about 180 miles.

**14. we found brethren.** There was obviously

a Christian Church at Puteoli—though in what way it originated, we cannot tell. The story of the planting of Christianity in Italy is one of those secrets of history which will probably never be revealed.

**to tarry . . . seven days.** Paul had evidently obtained such an influence over the centurion that he seems to have readily fallen in with the proposal, and allowed his prisoner to stay for a week at Puteoli and hold intercourse with his fellow-Christians in the town.

**and so we went toward Rome.** R.V., “and so we came to Rome.” In his hurry to reach his climax, Luke conveys his hero to Rome. In the following verse, however, he returns to the journey, and records the incident of the welcome given to Paul by the Roman Christians at Appii forum.

**15. from thence.** *I.e.*, from Puteoli.

**as far as Appii forum.** R.V., “the Market of Appius.” Appii forum was a town situated on the famous Appian Way, about 40 miles from Rome. It owed its name to its founder, “Appius.”

**The Three Taverns.** The name of a halting-stage on the Appian Way, about 10 miles from Appii forum, and 30 from Rome. The name “Tavern” is used in a wider sense than the English word. It denotes any kind of shop, and not merely a place of refreshment.

**16.** The words “the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard” are omitted in the R.V.

Acts xxviii. 17-31.

## PAUL AT ROME.

17 And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem  
18 into the hands of the Romans. Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no  
19 cause of death in me. But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had  
20 ought to accuse my nation of. For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this  
21 chain. And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judæa concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee.  
22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is  
23 spoken against. And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and  
24 out of the prophets, from morning till evening. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some  
25 believed not. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet  
26 unto our fathers, saying, *Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and*  
27 *seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with*

*their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal*  
 28 *them.* Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation  
 of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.  
 29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and  
 30 had great reasoning among themselves. And Paul dwelt  
 two whole years in his own hired house, and received all  
 31 that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God,  
 and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus  
 Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

The final paragraph of the book contains (1) an account of Paul's appeal to the Jews in Rome (vers. 17-29); (2) a short postscript describing Paul's life at Rome (vers. 30, 31). For a discussion of the problem raised by the abrupt ending of the book, see Introduction, pp. 12, 13.

**17. called the chief of the Jews together.** Up to the very end, Paul was true to his principle "to the Jews first," and not even the fierce attacks which had been made upon him at Jerusalem could deter him from seeking out his brethren in Rome and submitting his case to them.

**19. not that I had ought, etc.** The magnanimity of Paul shines out prominently in this statement. He disclaims altogether the idea that his appeal to Cæsar was a covert attack on his own countrymen.

**20. for the hope of Israel.** The attack upon him, Paul argues, was not caused by his disloyalty to the Jewish religion, but rather by his fidelity to it. It was because he believed in the promises made to Israel that he had become a convert to the Christian Faith. It was not because he was a worse Jew than his kinsmen, but because he was a better, that he had embraced Christianity.

**bound with this chain.** *I.e.,* the chain which



bound Paul's wrist to the wrist of the Roman soldier who always accompanied him. Cf. xxvi. 29 ; Eph. vi. 20.

**23. into his lodging.** This may be "the hired house" of ver. 30, or more probably a lodging placed at Paul's disposal by his friends in Rome.

**26, 27.** This passage is taken from Isa. vi. 9. It was quoted by Christ (Matt. xiii. 14 ; Mark iv. 12 ; Luke viii. 10 ; compare John xii. 40). There is one important variation from the original in Isaiah. Instead of "for the heart of this people is waxed gross," Isaiah reads, "make the heart of this people fat." Paul, like Christ (according to Matt. xiii. 14, but not according to the other references), following the Septuagint, softens down the harshness of the original. As quoted by Paul, the phrase "lest they should see with their eyes" is dependent upon the statement "their eyes have they closed." The spiritual blindness of the people is the result of their own action, and not of the work of the prophet, as in the Hebrew version of Isaiah.

**28. the salvation of God,** etc. R.V., "this salvation of God." Luke gives here a final illustration of Israel's rejection of the message. It was this rejection that justified the work amongst the Gentiles.

**30. two whole years.** This is the only reference to the length of the time of Paul's residence in Rome. It was during this period that he wrote the Epistles to the Philippians, the Colossians, and Philemon, which throw some light upon his work in the Imperial city (see especially Phil. i. 12-20). What happened at the end of the two years is quite uncertain. Some scholars hold that Paul was released for a time and continued his missionary

work, others that the trial resulted in his condemnation to death.

**in his own hired house.** An illustration of the comparative freedom allowed to Paul during the interval preceding his trial. Though he lived in his own house, however, he was under the constant surveillance of the soldiers who guarded him.

**31. the Lord Jesus Christ.** The only instance in Acts where this full title is bestowed on Jesus, though it is often found in the Pauline Epistles. The origin of the phrase is probably as follows:—Amongst the Jews Jesus was termed “the Christ” (or “the Messiah”) from the first. In the wider Gentile world this title was unknown, and consequently the term “Lord” was used as a substitute. The two ideas were subsequently combined, and the full phrase means “Jesus who is the Jews’ Messiah and the Gentiles’ Lord.”

**no man forbidding him.** A most emphatic phrase. Acts was written probably at a time when the Christians’ right to propagate their faith was being challenged and when persecution was being threatened by the Empire. One of the objects of Luke (see Introduction, pp. 6-8) was to defend the rights of his fellow-Christians, by showing that the Roman Empire had always in earlier times protected them. He ends his book by the triumphant statement that when Paul was brought to Rome, though he was a prisoner, he was allowed absolutely unimpeded liberty to proclaim his message.



# INDEX



Abraham, 98, 99.  
 Acts, aim of, 5-12.  
     authorship, 2-5.  
     characteristics, 15-18.  
     chronology, 30, 31.  
     conclusion, 12.  
     date, 12-15.  
     historical value, 18-25.  
     theology, 27-30.  
 Adoptionism, 28, 54, 143,  
     175.  
 Agabus, 154, 250.  
 Agrippa I. and II. *See*  
     Herod.  
 Alexandria, 226.  
 Amphipolis, 210.  
 Ananias and Sapphira, 77-  
     79.  
 Ananias (of Damascus), 125,  
     126, 259, 292.  
 Ananias (High Priest), 265.  
 Angel, 17, 82, 108, 118,  
     161, 301.  
 Annas, 67, 123.  
 Antioch (Syria), 148-152.  
 Antioch (Pisidia), 173.  
 Antipatris, 272.  
 Antonia, 255.  
 Apollonia, 210.  
 Apollo, 227.

Appii Forum, 309.  
 Aquila, 220, 224.  
 Areopagus, 215.  
 Aristarchus, 236.  
 Ascension, the, 38.  
 Asia, 48, 202.  
 Asiarchs, 236.  
 Assassins, the, 256.  
 Assos, 241.  
 Athens, 214.  
 Atonement, the, 28, 32, 52,  
     63.  
 Augustan band, 296.  
 Augustus, 296.  
 Baptism, 259.  
 Baptism of John, 37, 227,  
     229.  
 Bar-jesus, 168.  
 Barnabas, 76, 131, 151, 152,  
     166, 198.  
 Beautiful gate, 58.  
 Bernice, 284.  
 Beroëa, 212.  
 Bishops, 245.  
 Bithynia, 202.  
 Blastus, 163.  
 Breaking of bread, 55.  
 Cæsar, appeal to, 283.

- Cæsarea, 121, 137, 249, 271.  
 Candace, 119.  
 Cappadocia, 48.  
 Captain of Temple, 66.  
 Castor and Pollux, 308.  
 Cenchrea, 224.  
 Christian (the name), 152.  
 Christology, 27-30, 28, 32, 52, 54, 63, 175.  
 Chronology, 30, 31.  
 Cilicia, 94, 199.  
 Citizenship, Roman, 262.  
 Claudius, 154.  
 Common Life, 54-57, 73-76.  
 Conscience, 264.  
 Corinth, 220.  
 Cornelius, 136, 137, 142.  
 Council. *See* Sanhedrin.  
 Council of Jerusalem, 188-191, 193.  
 Cyprus, 76, 150, 167.  
 Damascus, 123, 128.  
 Deacons, 89.  
 Deputy, 168.  
 Derbe, 186.  
 Diana, 237.  
 Diaspora, 10, 47.  
 Dorcas, 134.  
 Drusilla, 279.  
 Egyptian, the, 255.  
 Elders, 89, 155, 187, 244, 245.  
 Elymas, 169.  
 Ephesus, 21, 225, 228-238.  
 Epicureans, 214.  
 Erastus, 232.  
 Ethiopian eunuch, 118-121.  
 Euroclydon, 300.  
 Exorcism, 232.  
 Felix, 270-280.  
 Festus, 282, 285, 289, 294.  
 Gaius, 139.  
 Galatia, 201.  
 Galatians, Epistle to, 129, 135.  
 Gallio, 223.  
 Gamaliel, 84, 85.  
 Gaza, 119.  
 Gentiles, 25-27, 136, 148, 149, 189.  
 Grecians, 90, 91, 157.  
 Hellenists. *See* Grecians.  
 Herod Agrippa I., 157, 158, 162, 163.  
 Herod Agrippa II., 284, 289, 294.  
 Herod Antipas, 72, 165.  
 Holy Spirit, 29, 35, 45, 46, 68, 91, 116, 127, 144, 147, 166, 202, 227, 229.  
 Iconium, 181.  
 Inscriptions, 21, 169, 211, 235, 237, 307.  
 Italian band, 136.  
 James, brother of John, 158.  
 James, brother of the Lord, 161, 193.  
 Jerusalem, poverty, 75.  
 Paul's visits, 155.  
 John the Baptist, 37, 227, 229.  
 John Mark, 165, 168.  
 Joppa, 138.  
 Josephus, 13, 58, 85-87, 162, 232, 255, 256.  
 Judas Barsabas, 197.  
 Judas Iscariot, 42, 43.

Judas of Galilee, 87.

Jupiter, 185.

Kingdom, the, 37.

Law, the, 96.

Laying on of hands, 92,  
116, 127, 166.

Libertines, 94.

"Lord Jesus Christ," 208,  
313.

Lots, 44.

Luke, 4, 5, 15-18.

Lycaonia, 184.

Lydda, 133.

Lysias, Claudius, 254, 261,  
264, 266, 269, 271.

Lystra, 183.

Macedonia, 203.

Magic, 82, 232.

Malta, 306.

Manaen, 165.

Mark, 165, 168.

Mary, 161.

Medical language, 5, 59,  
307.

Mercury, 185.

Miletus, 242.

Miracles, 23, 24, 58, 81,  
193, 232.

Mnason, 150, 250.

Moloch, 105.

Moses, 100-104.

Name, in the, 59.

Nicolas, 91.

Olivet, 40.

Organisation, 89.

Parousia, 28, 61.

Parthia, 48.

Paul, conversion of, 121-  
124, 258-260, 289-292.

visits to Jerusalem, 155.

the name, 169.

speeches, 172, 183, 217,  
243.

Christology, 175.

miracles, 23, 24, 232.

vow of, 224.

Pentecost, 45-47.

Peter, speeches, 42, 49-54,  
59-64, 141-144, 191.

miracles, 57-59, 81, 132-  
134.

vision, 138.

Pharisees, 85, 190, 267,  
290.

Philip, 113, 118, 137, 249.

Philippi, 204.

Philo, 47.

Phœnicia, 150.

Phrygia, 48, 201.

Pilate, 73.

Pisidia, 173.

Predestination, 178.

Priests, 92.

Priscilla, 220.

Proconsul, 168.

Prophets, 153.

Provincial government, 20-  
22, 168.

Publius, 306.

Quaternion, 159.

Remphan, 105.

Resurrection, 33, 35.

Roman Empire, 6-8.

Sadducees, 66, 82, 266.

Salamis, 167.

Samaria, 113.



- Sanhedrin, 67, 82, 264.  
 Sapphira, 77-79.  
 Saron, 134.  
 Scribes, 267.  
 Seleucia, 167.  
 Sergius Paulus, 169.  
 Servant of God, 62, 64.  
 Seven, the, 89-92.  
 Silas, 199.  
 Simon Magus, 113, 114, 116.  
 Solomon's Porch, 61.  
 Son of Man, 110.  
 Sopater, 239.  
 Sosthenes, 223.  
 Stephen, 26, 92, 93, 95-96,  
     102, 106, 109.  
 Stoics, 214.  
 Sychem, 100.  
 Synagogues, 94.  
 Tabitha, 134.  
 Tarsus, 131, 256.  
 Tertullus, 273, 276.  
 Thecla, 180.  
 Theophilus, 34.  
 Thessalonica, 210.  
 Theudas, 23, 85.  
 Three Taverns, 309.  
 Thyatira, 205.  
 Times of refreshing, 63.  
 Times of restitution, 64.  
 Timothy, 200.  
 Tongues, gift of, 45-47, 144,  
     229.  
 Trophimus, 239.  
 Tychicus, 239.  
 Tyrannus, 231.  
 Vows, 224, 252.  
 "Way, The," 123, 231, 259,  
     276, 279.  
 We-passages, 2-4, 154, 204.  
 Women, 179, 213.



## Date Due

01837

N 8 37

F 8 '40

NO 13 '52

DE 3 '52

WA 5-172

NY 11 53

MAN 1 60





BS2341 .W532 5  
The Acts of the Apostles

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 00059 9920